

Eckhart

**Foxy Tale
By Karen Janigan**

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Foxy Tale

ACT ONE

EXT. PEI -- MORNING

The SUN peeks above the horizon on the ocean.

EXT. PEI - WALKER'S FARM -- MORNING

The farm is peacefully still as greys and purples of night give way to the sun's fingers of scarlet and gold.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

As surely as dawn follows night, so does fall follow summer on the island of Prince Edward. With the harvest in, everyone in Crumbfest Cove is having a bit of fun before winter.

We hear the loud, insistent CROWING of a rooster.

EXT. BARN -- MORNING

The crowing ROOSTER struts and crows before hay bales stacked by the entrance, under the loft window.

BOSS MOUSE lurches out, a yellow nightcap with red-and-black ladybugs and a red tassel, slipping over his eyes.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Well, almost everyone.

BOSS MOUSE

SHADDUP.

(in rhythm with rooster strut)

How many times do I have to tell you? I need my rest.

Can't you see I'm sleeping?!? Listen to---

A PINTO BEAN flies through the air and knocks Boss Mouse to the ground, his absurd nightcap flying off his head.

SFX: GIGGLING.

Boss jerks around to see--

EXT. BARN - LOFT WINDOW

BRIDGID and ECKHART trying to smother their giggles. They have a slingshot and a pile of beans.

BRIDGID

Sorry.

ECKHART

We're just experimenting.

They both giggle. Boss M

NED

Sorry, boss.

SHORTY

Sorry, boss.

(beat)

What's gotta stop?

BOSS MOUSE

Those little pipsqueaks laughed at me. They DARED to laugh at me. You know what that means?

SHORTY

They think you're funny?

Boss Mouse hits Shorty with his nightcap.

BOSS MOUSE

They're not afraid of me anymore.

Ned and Shorty gasp. Then--

NED

Oooh that's bad.

SHORTY

Very bad. Why is that bad?

Boss Mouse clamps his nightcap down over Shorty.

BOSS MOUSE

Without fear, there's no power. And I love power. I need power. I deserve power.

SHORTY

Who turned out the lights?

Shorty falls over.

NED

Whaddya want us to do, boss?

BOSS MOUSE

(turns to mirror)

Find me a way to be scarier!

Makes a menacing face to himself in the mirror.

EXT. ROTTEN LOG -- MORNING

Bridgid and Eckhart, giggling, race from the field to a rotten log at the bottom of sloping green hill.

Bridgid reaches the log first.

BRIDGID

I win.

Eckhart touches shortly after.

ECKHART

No fair. I couldn't stop laughing.

They grin at each other.

Eckhart looks up...

ANGLE ON

Halfway up the hill is a burrow opening. Above it a sign "The Roswald Arms" with a a CREST: a YELLOW SHIELD, a RED "X" and a BLACK-AND-WHITE SKUNK, TAIL HELD HIGH.

ECKHART (O.S)

There's Sir Roswald's inn.

BACK TO:

Eckhart pointing as he rises and Bridgid looking.

ECKHART

Let's go visit him.

BRIDGID

Visit ole stinky? In his stinky ole hotel? Where no one ever stays 'cause it's way too gross?

ECKHART

It's not that bad.

BRIDGID

Yeah right!

ECKHART

Really you get used to the smell after a while.

BRIDGID

But he's so *mean*.

ECKHART

Not really. Besides, he's got lotsa great stories and stuff.
(heads up hill)
Wait 'til you see. It's like a museum.

BRIDGID

(runs off)
No way. Later!

ECKHART

Scaredy cat!

BRIDGID

Smart mouse.

Eckhart continues up the hill to the entrance.

EXT. SIR ROSWALD'S INN

Eckhart knocks on the door, his nose going overtime.

There's no answer. Eckhart pushes the door open and steps in.

INT. SIR ROSWALD'S INN - LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

Eckhart comes in. It's large and cluttered, dusty and shadowed. A window lets in some filtered light. It's crammed with books, scrolls, marbles on stands like globes, beach glass, bird feathers. Two comfy wingback chairs. An eccentric English squire's country home.

Eckhart hears RUMMAGING through a back doorway.

ECKHART

Sir Roswald?

Eckhart approaches the doorway. A big shape emerges. It's not Sir Roswald, but eme

ACT TWO

The Fox thrusts her sniffing nose toward Eckhart who backs up against a large CANVAS BAG and can go no farther.

ECKHART

(squeaking)

Please.

(clears his throat)

Don't eat me.

FELICIA

(smiling)

Hush now, child. No need to get your tail in a twist. I'm not going to eat you.

ECKHART

You're n-n-n-not?

FELICIA

No. I'm a vegetarian.

Felicia jumps over Eckhart onto one of the wing chairs. Eckhart spins, fascination beginning to replace fear.

ECKHART

Vegetarian?

FELICIA

(lying down)

So much better for your health, don't you agree?

Eckhart nods.

FELICIA

Where are my manners? My name is Felicia.

ECKHART

I'm Eckhart.

FELICIA

Charmed.

(beat)

I am sorry to have scared you.

Felicia runs a paw over a marble, marvelling at the dust.

FELICIA

I'm new here and need a place for the winter.

(looks at Eckhart)

Do you have any vacancies?

ECKHART

Oh no. It's...

FELICIA

(downcast)

Oh my. What am I going to do. I don't know a soul and the nights are getting colder. Oh my. Oh my.

She jumps off the chair and moves to the canvas bag by the entrance.

ECKHART

I'm sure you can stay here.

FELICIA

(turning)

But you said...

ECKHART

This isn't MINE, it belongs to Sir Roswald. And he always has room. In fact, I don't think he's had a guest since he opened this inn.

FELICIA

(eyes narrowing)

No?

ECKHART

Well, he's a *skunk*.

FELICIA

(relieved)

Oh. Well I don't mind that.

The door SLAMS open.

Alarmed, Felicia springs to her feet, Eckhart backs up.

SIR ROSWALD roars in, puffed up and angry. He sees Felicia and is stunned for a moment. Then roars at her.

SIR ROSWALD

Never fear, Eckhart. I shall protect you.

ECKHART

Wait!

But Sir Roswald bounds over him onto the chair after Felicia who springs over the back. The chair CRASHES backwards.

SIR ROSWALD

Flee, Eckhart. Flee.

Felicia careers into a table, dumping a load of scrolls. She scrambles over them as Sir Roswald lumbers off the back of the chair.

SIR ROSWALD

My scrolls!
 (to Felicia)
 OUT. OUT. Or I'll SPRAY!

FELICIA

Oh my. Oh my.

Felicia looks around, panicked. Eckhart's beside the door, gesturing.

ECKHART

This way.

Felicia heads to him, tripping over the slingshot. She's down for an instant. Then back up and out the door, Sir Roswald picks up the slingshot and heads out after her.

ECKHART

Stop! Stop!

Eckhart zips outside after them.

EXT. SIR ROSWALD'S INN -- CONTINUOUS

Sir Roswald throws the slingshot at Felicia, who ducks. The slingshot lands in a branch of a fiery red maple tree.

Eckhart runs until he's between Sir Roswald and Felicia, protecting her.

ECKHART

She's a *customer*. She wants a room. That's all.

SIR ROSWALD

(exploding)
 Rent a room? To a FOX?

FELICIA

I'd be terribly grateful if you'd...

SIR ROSWALD

NOT ONE WORD!
 (to Eckhart)
 You want me to host a sneaky, lying, greedy, mouse-eating THIEF?

ECKHART

Felicia's different.

SIR ROSWALD

HAH!

ECKHART

And... well... you could use a customer.

Felicia watches with interest, keeping her head down.

SIR ROSWALD

I do not. Particularly not a fox.

ECKHART

But....

SIR ROSWALD

And I don't need any friends silly enough to befriend a...
a... VIXEN!

ECKHART

Silly?

(angry)

It's no wonder you don't have any customers. Or friends.
And it's not because you smell. It's because you can be so
mean.

Sir Roswald is cut to the quick. He opens his mouth. Then shuts it and turns and beetles into his inn.

ECKHART

Wait. I'm sorry.

Sir Roswald SLAMS the door behind him.

FELICIA

My suitcase!

Eckhart knocks on the door.

ECKHART

Sir Roswald. I didn't mean it.

Eckhart knocks again. Then HARDER.

FELICIA

Oh my.

Still no response. Eckhart turns away.

ECKHART

We'll get it back. We just have to wait until he calms
down. Maybe after his nap.

Eckhart starts down the hill. Felicia takes another look at the door and then follows, head down.

EXT. ROTTEN LOG -- CONTINUOUS

Eckhart reaches the log and looks at Felicia walking, downcast.

ECKHART

He's always a little grumpy. I'm sure he didn't mean it.

FELICIA

Thanks for defending me. Not many mice would do that.

ECKHART

(blushing)

I dunno.

FELICIA

I do. Judging by Sir Roswald's reaction, I don't think I better stay in Crumbfest Cove. As much as I'd like to.

ECKHART

We're not all like Sir Roswald.

FELICIA

(smiling)

You're very young.

ECKHART

I can prove it. If you let me!

CUT TO:

INT. BARN - NEAR ENGINE CASING -- DAY

Boss Mouse has his back turned to Ned and Shorty and is tying something behind his head.

BOSS MOUSE

Get ready!

Boss Mouse pivots. He's wearing a ridiculous MONSTER MASK made of corn husks and silks.

Ned and Shorty stare blankly at Boss.

Behind Boss, Felicia -- Eckhart on her back -- slinks right past a LADDIE who sleeps under the lip of the loft.

BOSS MOUSE

GRRRRR!

ANGLE ON

Ned and Shorty, seeing Felicia.

NED/SHORTY

(screaming)

Ahhh!

As Ned and Shorty run dive head first into a rain barrel.

BOSS MOUSE (O.S.)

It works!

Ned pokes his head out.

NED

F-f-f-OX!

Boss turns around, sees Felicia, SCREAMS and scrambles for the barrel, belly-flopping in.

Eckhart, laughing, leans forward to Felicia's ear.

ECKHART

That's Boss Mouse.

They slink farther into the barn, where Bridgid and SWEENEY play marbles with small pebbles.

ECKHART

Hi guys...

Bridgid and Sweeney look up, but all they see is a fox.

BRIDGID

FOX!

She grabs Sweeney and half-drags, half-carries him into the hay.

All the animals in the barn explode into a CACOPHONY of sound, except Laddie who remains asleep.

FELICIA

(crouching)

Oh my!

WINNIE sidesteps toward the fox in her role of protector. She then sees Eckhart.

WINNIE

Eckhart! I'll save you.

ECKHART

Nooo!

Winnie sidles over and holds his hoof over Felicia's head.

ECKHART

WINNIE! STOP!

BACK TO:

Ned, Shorty and Boss, his monster mask drenched and askew, their heads out of the water, staring in disbelief.

ECKHART (O.S.)

She's a friend.

Boss Mouse's eyes narrow with interest.

NED

Kid's a goner.

SHORTY

I can't watch.

Shorty tries to hide his eyes with Boss Mouse's mask. Boss Mouse hits him and he PLONKS into the water, again.

BACK TO:

Winnie, puzzled, puts her hoof down.

ECKHART

Her name's Felicia.

(whispers)

Say something.

FELICIA

(shaky)

I'm very pleased to meet you.

(beat)

All of you.

Winnie backs up a touch, as Bridgid and Sweeney poke their noses out of the hiding place.

ECKHART

She's a vegetarian!

WINNIE

Well, I never...

FELICIA

(gaining confidence)

I didn't mean to scare you, but Eckhart said it would be all right.

As the animals, including Bridgid and Sweeney, come closer, Felicia feels the continued suspicion.

FELICIA

A-hem. Eckhart's told me such nice things about everyone. I couldn't wait to meet you all.

Bridgid and Sweeney come forward, fascinated.

FELICIA

You must be Bridgid and Sweeney.

She extends her paw.

FELICIA

Nice to meet you.

Bridgid and Sweeney look at each other and Eckhart.

ECKHART

It's okay. Go ahead.

Bridgid puts her paw in Felicia's and they shake. A MURMER of wonder goes through the others.

NED (O.S.)

What kind of fox is that?

BACK TO:

Ned and Shorty are full of wonder as Boss's eyes narrow with interest.

SHORTY

Friendly with mice?

Boss smiles: an idea forming in his head.

BOSS MOUSE

She could be very valuable to me. Very valuable indeed.

He takes off his mask and throws it away, grinning.

PAN UP TO:

INT. BARN - MADAME THEL'S LOFT

CLARA and MADAME THEL are tying corn husk covers on preserves. MAVIS is licking a bowl, fruit preserves all over her face.

Clara glances down.

BACK TO:

INT. BARN FLOOR

Felicia, with her nose down, letting Bridgid, Sweeney and Eckhart ride on her back!

CLARA (O.S.)

Oh NO!

BACK TO:

INT. BARN - MADAME THEL'S LOFT -- CONTINUOUS

Clara springs out of frame, Madame Thel looks down, looks horrified and springs after her.

BACK TO:

INT. BARN FLOOR

Felicia trots in circles, tail held high, carrying the kids.

SWEENEY

Faster! Faster!

Felicia obliges, trotting faster.

SWEENEY

Weee. This is FUN.

Bridgid watches her brother fondly.

CLARA (O.S.)

Jump! Eckhart, jump!

Felicia stops trotting as Clara marches up, spoon held high.

ECKHART

It's okay, mama.

CLARA

NOW! Bridgid, Sweeney. You too. Quickly.

Felicia bows her nose down to the floor. Eckhart looks at Bridgid and they help Sweeney to the floor.

ECKHART

But mama!

FELICIA

Listen to your mother, Eckhart.

Felicia turns to Clara and blinks her eyes, charmingly. Clara turns to Madame Thel, puzzled. Madame Thel shrugs.

FELICIA

I understand. I have kits of my own. Grown now. But a mother always worries, doesn't she?

CLARA

Uhm...Come away, Eckhart.

Eckhart reluctantly walks over to her, she grabs his hand and pulls him away to a safe distance.

MADAME THEL

You too, Bridgid. Sweeney.

BACK UP TO:

INT. MADAME THEL'S LOFT

Mavis, covered in jam, has finished the bowl. She looks around, alone.

SFX: Tinkling of bell.

Mavis turns, curious, and wanders to the source of the SOUND.

INT. BARN - LOFT -- CONTINUOUS

Mavis is looking around, when the bell TINKLES and CAT, with a bright red COLLAR and BELL, jumps out from her hiding place and traps Mavis's tail.

MAVIS
Helpppp!

CUT TO:

INT. BARN FLOOR

TOMIS with an armful of corn husks sees the cat trap Mavis.

TOMIS
MAVIS!

Tomis drops the husks and runs forward, but Felicia races by him and starts up the loft.

TOMIS
Nooooo!

He's joined by the others, Eckhart in the lead.

ECKHART
It's okay, Grandpa.

CUT TO:

INT. BARN - LOFT

Felicia and Cat -- both puffed up as large as they will go -- eyeing each other and growling.

Mavis wriggles her tail free and runs.

Cat sees Mavis' movement, and turns her head bell tinkling.

Felicia pounces at Cat. Teeth bared. Cat leaps forward. Felicia's paw lands a solid THWACK on Cat's head, sending her rolling over the edge of the loft.

Her collar snags on a HOOK on the edge of the loft and she hangs there for a moment.

INT. BARN FLOOR

Mavis joins Clara and grabs ahold, hiding her head. Tomis, Eckhart, Bridgid and Sweeney look up.

ECKHART
Cat's stuck!

ANGLE ON

Felicia peers over the edge of the loft. Cat gives one more desperate wiggle and slips out of the collar.

Cat lands on Laddie. Who wakens with a loud WOOF and chases Cat right out of the barn.

ECKHART

Hurrah!

Mavis looks up in wonder as Felicia grabs the collar and bell and swings it from her mouth in triumph.

BRIDGID (O.S.)

Hurrah for Felicia.

All the mice cheers.

Felicia gives a charming bow.

CUT TO:

INT. BARN FLOOR -- DAY

Mavis wide-eyed with wonder, is led forward by Clara. Eckhart, Bridgid and Sweeney surround the triumphant Felicia.

BRIDGID

That was so awesome.

CLARA

Thank you so much. If you hadn't... I'm so sorry about... judging you.

FELICIA

No harm done.

MAVIS

Are you really a fox?

FELICIA

(laughing)

Yes. I really am a fox.

TOMIS

Obviously, a special one.

(extends paw)

I'm Tomis Fielding, Eckhart's grandfather. And if there's anything I can do to repay you...

ECKHART

A place to stay.

FELICIA

Oh, Eckhart.

ECKHART

She wanted to rent a room at Sir Roswald but he chased her away.

FELICIA

He really *hates* me.

BOSS MOUSE

That stinky old windbag should be banished.

A dripping Boss Mouse thrusts his way forward to Felicia.

BOSS MOUSE

How could he do such a thing to someone as beautiful and talented as yourself.

ECKHART

He's not that bad.

FELICIA

Boss Mouse.

BOSS MOUSE

(nodding)

On behalf of the true residents of Crumbfest Cove, I'd like to offer you lodgings my spare room, right here in the barn.

FELICIA

Most kind.

CLOSE ON: Eckhart. He doesn't like Boss cozying up to his new friend.

CUT TO:

INT. BARN - NEAR ENGINE CASING

Felicia circles and settles in a potato basket behind Boss Mouse's engine casing. She sits back up, and looks at Boss Mouse, standing with Ned, Shorty and Eckhart.

FELICIA

It's a little cramped.

BOSS MOUSE

We'll make it bigger!

FELICIA

It'll be fine for now. I'm so tired.

ECKHART

I'll be back first thing tomorrow to finish our tour.

Felicia hops out of the basket and licks Eckhart.

FELICIA

Thank you for being a friend.

ECKHART

(smiling slightly)

No thank you.

Eckhart skips away and Felicia turns to Boss Mouse.

FELICIA

I'll never be able to repay you.

BOSS MOUSE

(smiling)

I know a way that would help you too.

FELICIA

(purring)

Really?

NED

How, Boss?

SHORTY

Yeah. How, Boss?

BOSS MOUSE

How would you like to be the new owner of the Roswald Arms? A charming lady such as yourself could turn it into a really *profitable* business.

NED

Sir Roswald would never go for that.

BOSS MOUSE

Who said that foul flea-bag would still be around?

Felicia's eyes light up with interest, as Boss Mouse smiles.

BOSS MOUSE

What do you think?

Felicia coolly appraises Boss Mouse.

FELICIA

Full of surprises aren't you?

BOSS MOUSE

(with false modesty)

I try my best.

ACT THREE

INT. FIELDING HOME -- NIGHT

Tomis tucks Mavis and Eckhart into bed.

MAVIS

She was sooo fast. And all those teeth.

TOMIS

Yes. She *looks* quite ferocious.

ECKHART

But she isn't.

MAVIS

She's wonderful.

ECKHART

I just wish Sir Roswald would give her a chance. I don't understand why he's being so mean to her.

TOMIS

Some creatures are prickly by nature.

TOMIS

They have stong opinions and it's almost impossible to change their minds.

ECKHART

But he'll never have guests -- or friends -- unless he starts being nicer.

TOMIS

Do you think he sees anything wrong with how he behaves?

ECKHART

(downcast)

No.

TOMIS

It's hard enough to change your basic nature when you want to. But it's impossible when you don't.

Clara comes into the room and lets out the lightning bugs.

CLARA

Enough chatter. Time to sleep.

Eckhart, a little troubled, snuggles down. But doesn't close his eyes. As Clara and Tomis leave.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Eckhart knew that underneath Sir Roswald's grumpiness was a loyal heart of gold. But he was the only one who saw it. He stayed awake late into the night trying to figure out a way to make Sir Roswald's outside more like his inside.

EXT. BARN -- MORNING

Another sunny peach of day.

INT. BARN - NEAR ENGINE CASING

Mavis and Eckhart approach the potato basket.

ECKHART
The cave, after the lighthouse.

MAVIS
But Winnie might not be going.

ECKHART
But we can ride on Felicia's back.

ANGLE ON

The Potato basket is empty. No Felicia.

MAVIS
Where is she?

ECKHART
(eyes narrowing)
Boss Mouse!

He knocks on Boss Mouse's door. After a beat, it opens.

BOSS MOUSE
WHAT?

ECKHART
What did you do to Felicia?

BOSS MOUSE
Whaddya mean?

ECKHART
She's gone. What did you do?

BOSS MOUSE
She's just gone to get her suitcase.

ECKHART
Alone?

BOSS MOUSE
(nodding)
Dunno what's taking her so long, though. She should have been back by now. Do you think old stinky did something?

On Eckhart, fearful.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROTTEN LOG

Eckhart hops over the rotten log and Tomis goes around.

ECKHART

C'mon grandpa. Hurry.

TOMIS

I'm sure Felicia is long gone. Foxes are like that, you know.

ECKHART

Felicia's different. She wants to stay.

SFX: Plaintive mewing sounds.

Eckhart hears them.

ECKHART

Grandpa! Listen!

SFX: Mewing Sounds

ECKHART

Over here.

He dashes towards the fiery maple tree at the side of the hill by Sir Roswald's hotel. The mewing grows louder.

EXT. TREES

Eckhart looks up. Felicia hangs helplessly from a branch, trussed up in Eckhart's slingshot that Sir Roswald threw.

ECKHART

Felicia!

FELICIA

Eckhart! Thank goodness.

ECKHART

We'll have you out in a minute.

Eckhart zooms up the tree to evaluate the tangle.

BOSS MOUSE (O.S.)

OH My Goodness!

ANGLE ON:

Boss Mouse, Ned and Shorty arrive.

BOSS MOUSE

This is an OUTRAGE.
 (to Ned and Shorty)
 Don't just stand there.

Ned and Shorty go to help.

BOSS MOUSE

That skunk is a menace.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIR ROSWALD'S INN

Sir Roswald comes out of his hotel. He gives a BIG stretch and then starts whistling and lumbering toward the trees.

BACK TO:

EXT. TREES

Felicia hears the whistling and then sees Sir Roswald.

FELICIA

Kee--ep him away from me!

The mice look -- there's Sir Roswald.

FELICIA

He did this to me.

Sir Roswald joins Tomis and Boss Mouse. Ned, Shorty and Eckhart continue to try to free her, in a little comedy of errors.

SIR ROSWALD

I beg your pardon?

FELICIA

I asked for my bag back and you told me I wouldn't need it where I was going.

(to Tomis)

Then he strung me up. I don't know what he would have done to me if you hadn't found me.

SIR ROSWALD

(indignant)

What? I did nothing of the sort. How dare you accuse me. You... you vagabond.

Felicia hits the ground with a little thump. Eckhart, Shorty and Ned scamper down the tree, as Boss Mouse helps her up.

BOSS MOUSE

That's the last straw, Stinky. You should be run out on the rails. Booted out of Crumbfest Cove. Banished FOR LIFE.

NED

Yeah!

ECKHART

Hey wait. That's not fair.

ANGLE ON:

Tomis who is perplexed, looks at Sir Roswald.

TOMIS

Well... *someone* had to string Felicia up there. She couldn't do it herself.

SIR ROSWALD

(drawing himself up)

You are all *fools* if you take the word of a fox over mine.

Eckhart looks stung and the other mice gasp at the insult.

TOMIS

Now just wait a minute.

ECKHART

That's not fair.

SIR ROSWALD

I refuse to live among such *traitors*. I will vacate Crumbfest Cove immediately. And be glad to be clear of all you.

TOMIS

Don't be too hasty.

Sir Roswald turns, tail high in the air and marches off.

BOSS MOUSE

Good riddance to you, too!

ECKHART

Oh no.

FELICIA

Oh my. Oh my.

INT. SIR ROSWALD'S INN - LOBBY -- LATER

Sir Roswald dumps a bag on a travois, made from sticks and a canvas strap. The lobby is nearly bare of all his treasures.

SIR ROSWALD

(to himself)
Imagine. Accusing me.

Eckhart scampers in the window and lands in the lobby.

ECKHART
Please don't go.

SIR ROSWALD
Benedict Arnold Junior!

ECKHART
Grandpa wasn't accusing you. He was just trying to figure it out.

SIR ROSWALD
You started this by making friends with that ... vixen.

ECKHART
I'm your friend, too. And I don't want you run out of Crumbfest Cove.

SIR ROSWALD
Run out? I'm choosing to go. I could never stay, dear Eckhart, where I am not trusted.

ECKHART
If you'd just apologize, I'm sure everything would be all right.

SIR ROSWALD
Who's going to apologize to me? I've always been treated like an outsider because I'm not like everyone else. Well neither is Felicia, despite her pretty words.

ECKHART
I know how wonderful you are. You just have to let the others see it.

Sir Roswald smiles slightly at this and gets serious again.

SIR ROSWALD
If they can't see Felicia for who she is, how can they see me for who I am. And why should I bother?

ECKHART
Because I ... I'm going to miss you.

SIR ROSWALD
Should have thought of that before you made friends with that that ... vermin.

Sir Roswald slips into his travois and walks out. Eckhart, wipes the tears from his eyes and follows.

EXT. SIR ROSWALD'S INN - DAY

Sir Roswald, tail held high, drags his luggage past Tomis, Boss Mouse, Felicia, Ned and Shorty. He looks neither left nor right, but continues down the hill out of sight.

ANGLE ON

Felicia and Boss Mouse rush toward the inn, practically knocking over Eckhart, who sadly stands at the doorway.

Tomis comes up to him.

TOMIS

We agreed that Felicia could stay here until Sir Roswald comes back.

Eckhart looks so unhappy that Tomis gives him a hug.

INT. SIR ROSWALD'S INN - LOBBY

Boss Mouse and Felicia come out from a doorway to the kitchen.

FELICIA

This place will be the toast of Crumbfest Cove.

BOSS MOUSE

And so will you.

FELICIA

That was a brilliant plan, stringing me up and blaming Sir Roswald.

(beat)

But what's in it for you?

BOSS MOUSE

Besides getting rid of an enemy? Well... I think you should hold a dinner. Invite all the mice of Crumbfest Cove and announce our *partnership*.

FELICIA

Partnership? In the hotel?

BOSS MOUSE

In ruling Crumbfest Cove. Any mouse that dares to laugh at me will have to answer to YOU. They'll be quaking in their boots.

As it dawns on Felicia.

FELICIA

A dinner party might be fun

(she smiles)

partner.

They give each other a high-five, their paws meeting in a SLAP.

EXT. DEEP WOODS -- EVENING

A SNAP of a STICK as Sir Roswald tries to enlarge a tiny hole in the base of a tree. A CANDLE flickers behind him. His belongings are strewn all over the ground.

He throws the broken stick away and turns, turns, turns trying to get comfortable in the tiny hole. He shivers as he settles down, wrapping his tail around his nose.

SIR ROSWALD

Buck up. You've been in tighter spots than this. At least you're rid of those foolish, foolish mice.

SIR ROSWALD

(beat)

They never could appreciate someone of your breeding and character.

(shivers)

Except Eckhart, of course. Bright lad, that.

Sir Roswald sighs, extinguishing the candle. From the dark.

SIR ROSWALD

Drat!

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELDING HOUSE -- EVENING

The dark night.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

Eckhart on the Fielding doorstep, looking out wistfully and shivering. Missing Sir Roswald.

The DOOR OPENS behind him and out steps Tomis, dressed for a party, and wraps a coat around Eckhart.

TOMIS

The girls are almost ready.

Eckhart doesn't respond. Tomis puts his paw on his shoulder.

TOMIS

What's wrong?

ECKHART

I betrayed Sir Roswald, didn't I?.

TOMIS

It was his decision to leave. He didn't have to be so mean.

ECKHART

I miss him so much.

TOMIS

He may change his mind and come back.

ECKHART

(shakes his head)

He's very proud. And, like you said, he can't change unless he wants to.

A beat of silence as Tomis appraises Eckhart's maturity.

ECKHART

And why would he want to? He knows the mice here don't like him.

Clara and Mavis come out, dressed for the party.

CLARA

C'mon you two. We don't want to be late for Felicia's party.

EXT. FELICIA'S INN (WAS SIR ROSWALD'S INN) -- NIGHT

A new sign FELICIA'S FANCY INN hangs above the door.

PAN DOWN TO:

Boss Mouse watches Ned and Shorty gently close a new twig "screen door" they've made for Felicia. The cat's collar and bell hang as a doorbell.

BOSS MOUSE

Perfect.

Eckhart, Clara, Mavis, Tomis, Bridgid, Sweeney and Madame Thel arrive.

BOSS MOUSE

Excellent. Right on time.

ECKHART

(suspicious to Tomis)

Why's *he* being so nice?

TOMIS

Turned over a new leaf?

Eckhart and Tomis both shake their heads "no."

MAVIS

Hey. That's Cat's bell.

BOSS MOUSE

Yesss. Felicia's trophy. Perhaps you should ring it to announce your presence.

Mavis steps forward and shakes the bell. It TINKLES prettily.

MAVIS
It sounds much nicer now.

Felicia, dressed in a red silk kimono, sweeps open the screen door, effusively.

FELICIA
My honoured guests. Come in.

INT. FELICIA'S INN - LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

The lobby's decorated minimalist Japanese style now, with twig furniture, screens and hay cushions. A tray of acorn shells with a steaming liquid sits on a low table.

Felicia crosses to the table and holds up the tray.

ANGLE ON

Eckhart, Mavis, Clara, Tomis, Madame Thel, Boss Mouse, Ned and Shorty in awe at the surroundings.

ECKHART
Wow. It's so different.

MAVIS
Beautiful.

MADAME THEL
Do I smell oregano?

Felicia approaches and offers Madame Thel a cup.

FELICIA
A refreshing tea that will cleanse you for the meal.

She continues to pass out the cups.

MADAME THEL
(sips)
Delicious. Wild thyme and summer savoury too.

FELICIA
You are a woman of taste.

Eckhart, still subdued, spots his slingshot lying in the middle of a sand garden under the window that has a twig screen too. He's examining the sand garden.

FELICIA
This way. Everybody.

Felicia graciously ushers all the other mice towards the back and to the right near the dining area.

We follow everybody but Eckhart, who lags behind.

ANGLE ON:

A low table with small pillows to sit on.

FELICIA
The dining area. Please be seated.

As the mice settle in:

SHORTY
What's for dinner? I'm starved.

FELICIA
(purring)
So am I.

BOSS MOUSE
But first an announcement...

FELICIA
If you insist, *boss*.

Boss grins in anticipation. Felicia stands at the head of the table, her back to Eckhart and the entrance.

FELICIA
I'm so fortunate to have come to Crumbfest Cove and met
so many delightful mice. You are all so wonderful...

Felicia pulls a LOOP that's concealed under the table.

ANGLE ON:

A fine mesh net drops from the ceiling onto the mice. Felicia pulls another lever and the mesh bottom is pulled tight and closed.

FELICIA
That I'm going to EAT YOU ALL UP. Tonight's menu:
STEWED MICE.

TOMIS
(panicked)
Run Eckhart run.

Felicia spins to see Eckhart wiggling through the twig screen on the window. She dashes after him, kimono flying, but misses.

Felicia, turns readjusting her kimono, smoothing her fur.

FELICIA
I'll get him later.

CLARA
I knew you were bad news.

MADAME THEL
Herb drink indeed. It's seasoning.

MAVIS
Mama! I want to go home!

NED/SHORTY
I'm not hungry. You don't have to. Changed my mind.

Mavis cries and buries her face in Clara's chest, as the mice struggle to get out. Boss Mouse presses against the mesh, close to Felicia.

BOSS MOUSE
(sputtering)
Not me. Right? You won't eat me?

FELICIA
You're a *mouse*, aren't you?

BOSS MOUSE
I'm your *partner*. I helped you frame Boss Mouse.

TOMIS
This is too much.

FELICIA
(to Boss)
I'm a fox. Fox eat mice. Especially lazy, fat, juicy mice like you.

BOSS MOUSE
But I got you this place.

FELICIA
So I'll eat you first.

Felicia grins viciously and laughs an evil laugh.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEEP WOODS -- NIGHT

Eckhart blindly crashes through undergrowth. Desperate.

ECKHART
Help. Help!

He trips over Sir Roswald's root and falls on top of him.

SIR ROSWALD
Ooof. Eckhart?

ECKHART

It's.. so. h-h-horrible.

He's crying and can barely breathe.

SIR ROSWALD

Felicia?

Eckhart nods.

ECKHART

Help. Please?

SIR ROSWALD

Never doubt it.

ECKHART

(relieved)

Oh, thank you.

SIR ROSWALD

Climb aboard. You can explain on the way.

Eckhart jumps on Sir Roswald's back and he goes lumbering away as fast as a skunk can travel.

CUT TO:

INT. FELICIA'S INN - KITCHEN

Felicia stirs a big, steaming pot on the stove. She throws in some seasonings, and takes a sniff.

FELICIA

Purrrfect!

She heads out, smacking her lips.

INT. FELICIA'S INN - DINING AREA

Sir Roswald is pulling the net with the mice inside a concealed tunnel in the back of the dining area. Eckhart, slingshot loaded, guards the rear.

BOSS MOUSE

Ow!!!!

ECKHART

(whispering)

Quiet.

FELICIA

What's going ON!

ECKHART

(yelling)

HURRY

The net disappears quick as wink, as Eckhart turns to find Felicia nearly on top of him.

He aims his slingshot and hits her right in the nose!

FELICIA

My nose!

Eckhart scampers between her legs towards the window, but Felicia has nailed a board over it.

ANGLE ON

Felicia stops rubbing her nose and pursues Eckhart.

FELICIA

You little rodent.

Eckhart heads for the front door. He can't push it open, so he squeeze through a hole

EXT. FELICIA'S INN -- CONTINUOUS

and begins to scramble away when...

Felicia barrels through the door, knocking it off its hinges. It just misses Eckhart and the bell and collar go flying around him. Tripping him.

Felicia's about to grab him when...

Sir Roswald appears in her path. Lifts his tail and...

SPRAYS Felicia in the face soundly.

She reels back, shocked, coughing, her eyes closed for the moment.

Eckhart picks up the collar and bell and sticks it around Felicia's neck.

Felicia shakes her head and TINKLES.

She races away into the woods, TINKLING and COUGHING as she goes.

PAN TO:

The assembled, freed mice, holding their noses, eyes blinking from the stench. They send up a huge muffled CHEER.

SIR ROSWALD

I'd like to see her show her face around here again.

ECKHART

(laughs, muffled)

We'll hear her first.

BRIDGID

And smell her.

Everyone, including Sir Roswald laughs.

CUT TO:

INT. SIR ROSWALD'S INN - LOBBY -- DAY

Restored to its former messy charm, Sir Roswald smiles as Tomis, holding a medal on a ribbon stands beside him. Ned, Shorty, Bridgid, Sweeney, Madame Thel, Mavis and Clara watch.

TOMIS

In the spirit of friendship we'd like to present this small token of our appreciation. And apologize for the way we treated you.

Tomis slips it over Sir Roswald's head. The flattened bottle cap) has a picture of a skunk rampant on it, like his inn.

BRIDGID

Eckhart was right. You don't notice your stink after a while.

ECKHART

(mortified)

Bridgid!

Sir Roswald roars with laughter. Then composes himself.

SIR ROSWALD

You don't mind the smell, Ms Barnes because I took a bath.

Eckhart grins at this.

SIR ROSWALD

I figured as long as I'm part of the community, I could *try* to fit in.

(beat)

I am very touched and pleased to have all my *friends* here. Safe and sound.

Sir Roswald looks across to Eckhart and gives him a warm smile.

Eckhart returns the smile glad to have his friend back.

SHORTY

Hate to interrupt. But I'm starving. What's to eat?

Sir Roswald claps his hands.

SIR ROSWALD

Garcon.

From the kitchen, comes Boss Mouse, frilly white apron and maid's cap, bearing a tray of nut and berry hors d'ouvres.

BOSS MOUSE

No laughing!

But of course, that's what happens. Boss fairly smolders with rage as he offers everyone, including Ned and Shorty, an hors d'oeuvre.

ANGLE ON

Tomis with his arm around Eckhart having a little giggle.

ECKHART

Looks good on him after siding with Felicia.

TOMIS

No honour among ruffians.

ECKHART

I don't understand how Felicia could hide her true nature so well. She seemed so charming and nice.

TOMIS

Well look at Sir Roswald.

ANGLE ON

Sir Roswald laughing with Clara and Mavis.

TOMIS (O.S.)

Who could have known under all that bluster was a loyal, steadfast friend to mice?

ANGLE ON

Tomis smiling at Eckhart.

TOMIS

Except for you.

ECKHART

Only because he let me.

TOMIS

Only because *you* let *him*.

Sir Roswald approaches, puts a paw around Eckhart and Tomis.

SIR ROSWALD

Don't you know it's rude to whisper, when there's a party going on?

They grin as Sir Roswald draws them into the crowd of happy mice. Sir Roswald the happiest of them all.

EXT. SIR ROSWALD'S INN -- NIGHT

The happy sounds of celebration inside. A "NO VACANCY" sign hangs outside.

PULL BACK AND FADE OUT:

THE END