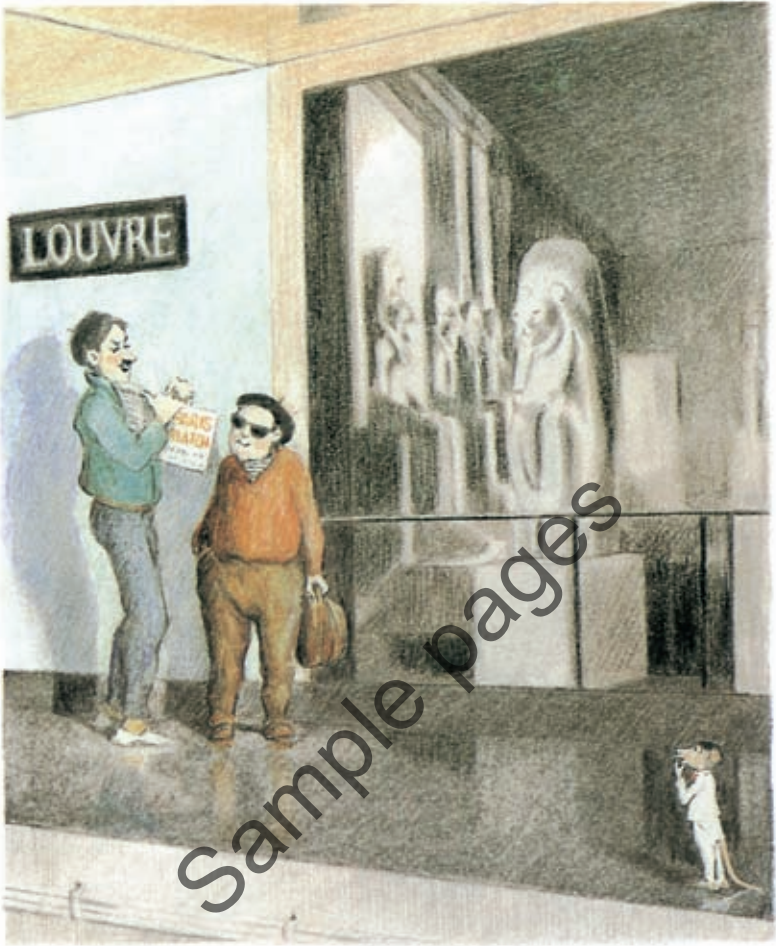




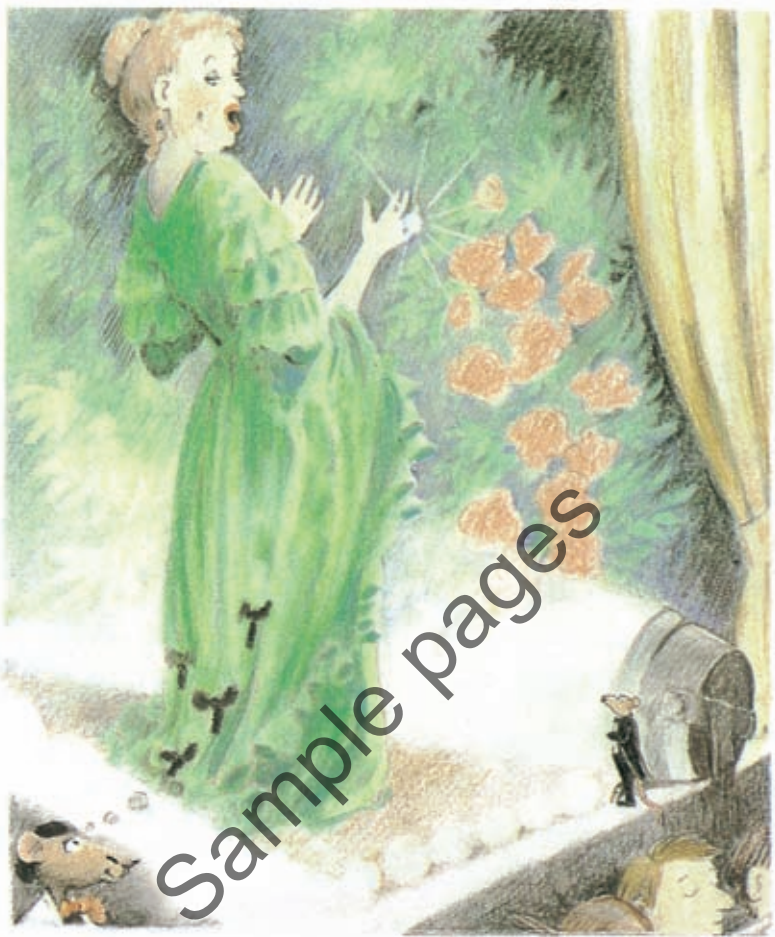
Marcel is a French mouse. He lives on a beautiful old boat in Paris. (His home is under the kitchen floor.) He likes books, restaurants and old films. He likes the opera, too.

One evening in June, Marcel finishes a detective story. Then he goes to have dinner with some friends. They live in the metro station at the *Louvre*.



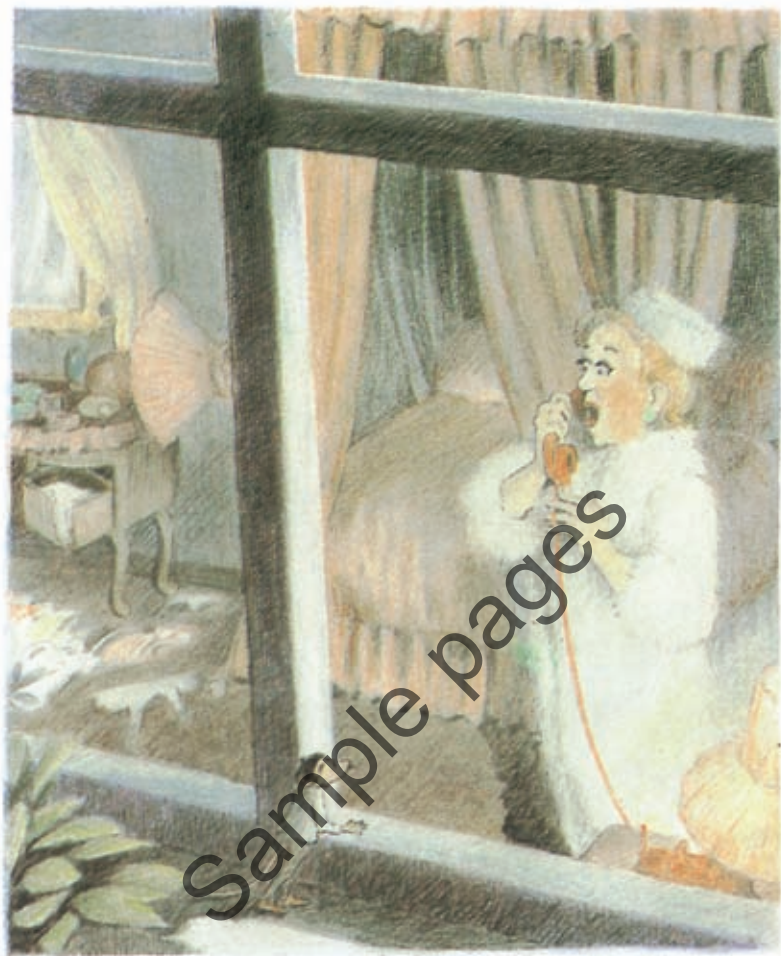
After dinner, Marcel waits at the station. He sees two men standing next to him. The tall one is reading a magazine, “Look,” he says, “here she is: *‘Opera star Miss Zaza Dupont with her beautiful one million pound diamond ring – the White Star.’*”

“*‘Her’* beautiful diamond ring?” The short man looks at the photo and laughs. “Not after tonight,” he says.

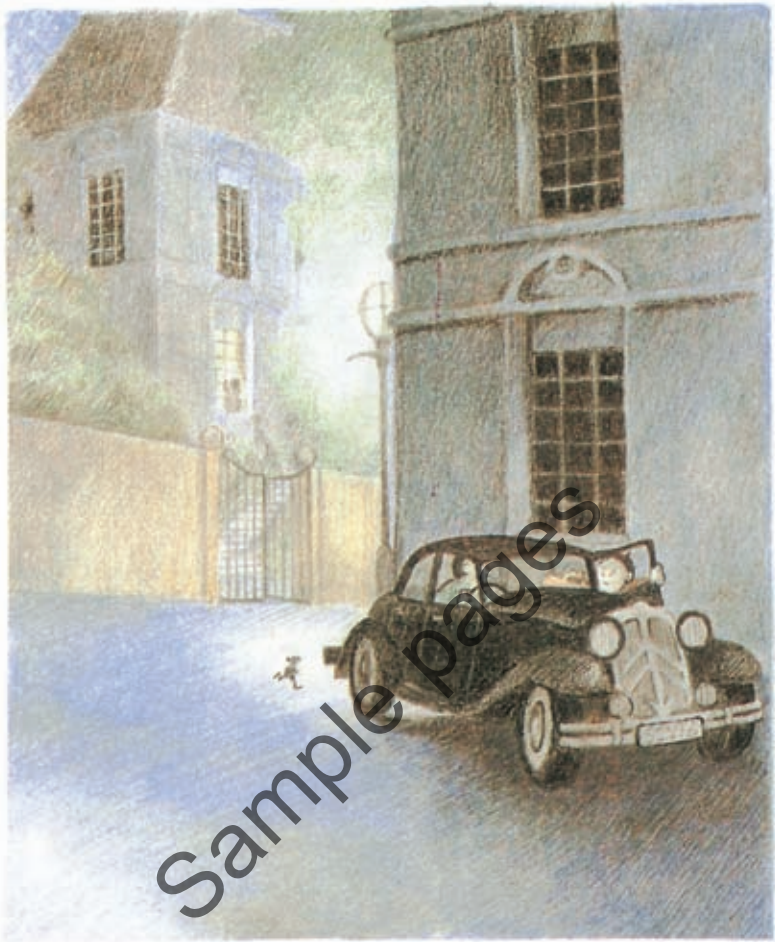


Marcel's mouth opens. "What?! Are the men going to *steal* Zaza Dupont's diamond?"

He remembers an evening at the opera two weeks before. Zaza's green dress. The music. The beautiful White Star on her finger. No! They *can't* steal it! The train comes and the men get on. Marcel pulls down his hat and follows them.



Half an hour later he gets off again at *La Mouette* station. But there are hundreds of people, and Marcel loses the two men. Then he sees an old mouse. "Excuse me," he says. "Do you know where Zaza Dupont lives?" But when Marcel finds Zaza's house, it is too late. "Yes – two men," she is telling the police on the telephone. "And they've got the White Star."



At that moment Marcel hears a motor start. “Where’s that coming from?” he thinks. Then he sees something at the end of the road. It’s them! It’s the thieves and they’re stealing a car! He runs across Zaza’s garden and down the street. He can see the car’s number-plate. It’s near. Very near. “Can I . . . ?” he thinks, and he jumps.