

Marcel is a French mouse. He's a detective and he lives in Paris. But Marcel doesn't live in Paris *all* year. Every November he visits London. His old friend – Henry – has a small flat there.

Marcel loves London. The beautiful buildings . . . the big, black taxis . . . the museums and shops. He loves Paris, but he loves London, too.



This story is about one of Marcel's November holidays. It starts at three o'clock on a Tuesday afternoon. Marcel is walking from Knightsbridge station to Henry's flat. He has two heavy bags with him.

Henry's address is 42 Old Wilton Street. Marcel looks at the numbers – 36 – 38 – 40. Yes, here it is. Number 42.

He sees a sign. It says: 'Professor J.T. Barton'. Marcel looks at it and thinks, 'That's new.' Then he goes down to Henry's flat.

Henry opens the door and smiles.

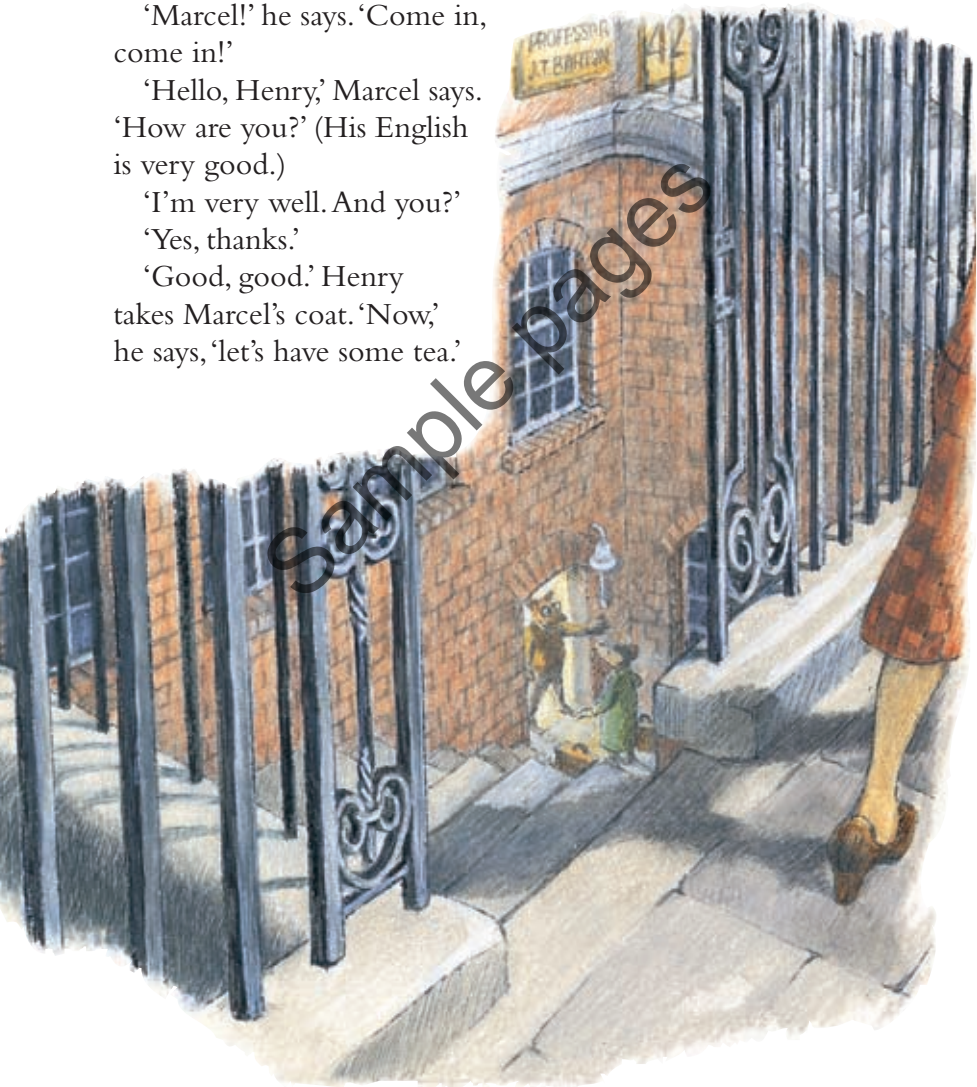
'Marcel!' he says. 'Come in, come in!'

'Hello, Henry,' Marcel says. 'How are you?' (His English is very good.)

'I'm very well. And you?'

'Yes, thanks.'

'Good, good.' Henry takes Marcel's coat. 'Now,' he says, 'let's have some tea.'





The two friends sit in big chairs. They drink tea and talk.

At five o'clock Marcel says, 'There's a new person in number 42. What's his name? Burton? Barnam?'

'Barton,' Henry says. 'Professor Barton. He's very, *very* clever. And that's not all. After tomorrow he's going to be famous, too!'

'Famous?!' Marcel looks at his English friend. 'Why?'

'It's a very interesting story,' Henry says. 'He has some letters. They were under the floor of an old woman's house in Oxford.'

'And . . . ?' Marcel says.

'And they're from Shakespeare to his son,' Henry says.

'*Shakespeare!*'

'Yes.' Henry smiles. 'Shakespeare. The old lady telephoned Professor Barton, and the Professor visited her. They talked about the letters and she said, "I want to give them to the British Museum in London. Can you do that for me?"'

‘And Professor Barton said yes?’

‘That’s right.’

‘Where are the letters now?’ Marcel asks.

‘In the professor’s flat. He’s going to give them to the British Museum tomorrow morning at ten o’clock. A lot of journalists and TV people are going to be there.’

Suddenly there’s a big *BANG!* and then a long *WHIZZ!*

‘What’s that noise?’ Marcel asks. He goes to the window. Then he remembers. ‘Oh – fireworks. Of course, it’s the 5th of November – your “Guy Fawkes Day”.’

Then a man walks down the steps from 42 Old Wilton Street.

Marcel looks at him. ‘Is that Professor Barton?’ he asks.

‘Yes,’ Henry answers. ‘He always goes to the cinema on Tuesday evenings.’

‘Aha!’ Marcel says.

‘Why do you say “Aha!”?’ Henry looks at his French friend. Then suddenly he understands. ‘Oh, you want to look at the Shakespeare letters.’ He smiles. ‘OK. Why not?’



After tea the two mice visit Professor Barton's flat. There's a small hole near the front door. Henry stops in front of it.

'Here we are,' he says. 'Do you want to go in first?'

'No, no. After you,' Marcel says.

At 5.55 they're in the professor's flat. It's very big, with a lot of old chairs and books. There are some beautiful pictures, too.

'Come with me,' Henry says.

He walks across the floor. Then he starts to climb a very tall bookcase. Marcel is behind him. They go up and up and up for a long time. Then Marcel sits on Charles Dickens's book, *Little Dorrit*. He can hear a lot of fireworks in the street.

'*BANG! BANG! BANG!*' they go. '*WHEEE! POW! WHOOSH!*'

There's a small, white button in the bookcase. Henry smiles at Marcel, and presses it. Suddenly, some of the books start to move.

'Why are they moving?' Marcel says. Then he understands. 'Ah, I understand. There's a safe.'

