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CHAPTER FOUR

He slept so deeply that he did not hear Mrs Dempster come in. She dusted the room and made his breakfast. Then she woke him with a cup of tea.

After breakfast he put a book in his pocket and went out for a walk. On the way he bought a few sandwiches. ('Then I shan't have to stop for lunch,' he said to himself). He found a pretty, quiet little park and spent most of the day there, studying. On his way home he called at the hotel to thank Mrs Wood for her kindness. She looked at him searchingly.

'You must not work too hard, sir. You look pale this morning. Too much studying isn't good for anyone. But tell me, sir, did you have a good night? Mrs Dempster told me you were still asleep when she went in.'

'Oh, I was all right,' said Moore with a smile. 'The ghosts haven't troubled me yet. But the rats had a party last night! There was one old devil with red eyes. He sat up on the chair by the fire. He didn't move until I picked up the **poker**. Then he ran up the rope of the alarm bell. I didn't see where he went. It was too dark.'

'Dear God!' cried Mrs Wood, 'an old devil sitting by the fire! Take care, sir, take care.'

'What do you mean?' asked Moore in surprise.

'An old devil! The old devil, perhaps.' Moore started to laugh.

'Please forgive me, Mrs Wood,' he said at last, 'I just couldn't help laughing at the idea of the Devil himself sitting by my fire...' And he began to laugh again. Then he went home for dinner.

That evening the noise of the rats began earlier. After dinner he sat down beside the fire and drank his tea. Then he sat down at the table and started to work again.

The rats disturbed him more than the previous night. They scratched and squeaked and ran about, and stared at him from the holes in the walls. Their eyes shone like tiny

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lamps in the firelight. But Moore was becoming used to them. They seemed playful rather than **aggressive**. Sometimes the bravest rats ran out onto the floor or across the tops of the pictures. Now and again, when they disturbed him, Moore shook his papers at them. They ran to their holes at once. And so the early part of the night passed quite quietly.

Moore worked hard for several hours.

All at once he was disturbed by a sudden silence. There was not a sound of running, or scratching, or squeaking.

The huge room was as silent as the grave. Moore remembered the **previous** night. He looked at the chair by the fireside - and got a terrible shock. There, on the great high-backed oak chair, sat the same enormous rat. It was staring at him with hate.

Without thinking, Moore picked up the nearest book and threw it. It missed, and the rat did not move. So Moore again picked up the poker. Again the rat ran up the rope of the alarm bell. And once more the other rats started their scratching and squeaking. Moore was unable to see where the rat had gone. The light of the lamp did not reach as far as the high ceiling, and the fire had burned low.

Moore looked at his watch. It was almost midnight. He put more wood on the fire and made a pot of tea. Then he sat down in the great oak chair by the fire and enjoyed his tea.

'I wonder where that old rat went just now,' he thought. 'I must buy a rat trap in the morning.' He lit another lamp. He placed it so that it would shine into the right-hand corner of the wall by the fireplace. He got several books ready to throw at the creature, Finally he lifted the rope of the alarm bell. He put it on the table and fixed the end of it under the lamp.

As he handled the rope, Moore noticed how **pliable** it was. 'You could hang a man with it,' he thought. Then he stood back and admired his preparations.

'There, my friend,' he said aloud. 'I think I'll learn your secret this time!'

He started work again, and was soon lost in his studies. But once again he was disturbed by a sudden silence. Then the bell rope moved a little, and the lamp on top of the rope moved too. Moore made sure that his books were ready for throwing. Then he looked

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along the rope. As he looked, the great rat dropped from the rope onto the old oak chair. It sat there staring at him angrily. He picked up a hook and aimed it at the rat. The creature jumped cleverly to one side. Moore threw another book, but without success. Then, as Moore stood with a third hook in his hand, ready to throw, the rat squeaked and seemed to be afraid. Moore threw the book and it hit the rat's side. With a squeak of pain and fear, and a look of real hate, it ran up the back of the chair and made a great jump onto the rope of the alarm bell. It ran up the rope like lightning, while the heavy lamp shook with its desperate speed. Moore watched the rat carefully. By the light of the second lamp, he saw it disappear through a hole in one of the great pictures on the wall.

'I shall check my **unpleasant** little visitor's home in the morning,' said Moore to himself as he picked up his books from the floor. 'The third picture from the fireplace: I shan't forget.' He examined the books. He picked up the third book that he had thrown. 'This is the one that hurt him!' he said to himself. Then his face turned pale. 'Why - it's my mother's old Bible! How strange!' He sat down to work again, and once more the rats in the walls started their noise. This did not worry him. **Compared with** the huge rat, these ones seemed almost friendly. But he could not work. At last he closed his books and went to bed. The first red light of morning was shining through the window as he closed his eyes.

Look up the following words in the dictionary. Write the word in your language.

a poker = _____ aggressive = _____

previous = _____ pliable = _____

unpleasant = _____ compared with = _____

Answer the following statements true or false.

Moore hardly slept at all in the night.	☐ True ☐ False
Moore did not hear Mrs Dempster come in in the morning.	☐ True ☐ False
After breakfast, Moore went for a walk in the park to study.	☐ True ☐ False
Mrs Dempster told Moore he was studying too much.	☐ True ☐ False
The rats did not bother Moore for the rest of the night.	☐ True ☐ False
Mrs Wood told Moore that the rat he saw on the chair was the devil.	☐ True ☐ False
The rats eyes shone like tiny lamps in the firelight.	☐ True ☐ False

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The rats seemed very aggressive.	☐ True ☐ False
The second time Moore was disturbed by a loud noise.	☐ True ☐ False
The enormous rat was sitting again on the high-backed chair.	☐ True ☐ False
Moore chased the rat with the poker.	☐ True ☐ False
The enormous rat was afraid of his mother's old Bible	☐ True ☐ False
The enormous rat disappeared under the floorboard.	☐ True ☐ False
Moore went to sleep at dawn.	☐ True ☐ False

Irregular verbs in the text.

Review the irregular verbs and write them in the past tense and the past participle.

the infinitive	past tense	past participle *hint* (have/has+__)
to sleep	_____	_____
take	_____	_____
shine	_____	_____
wake	_____	_____
buy	_____	_____
find	_____	_____
run	_____	_____
think	_____	_____
sit	_____	_____
stand	_____	_____
throw	_____	_____
see	_____	_____

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