

An Introduction Story to
Felix and Friends

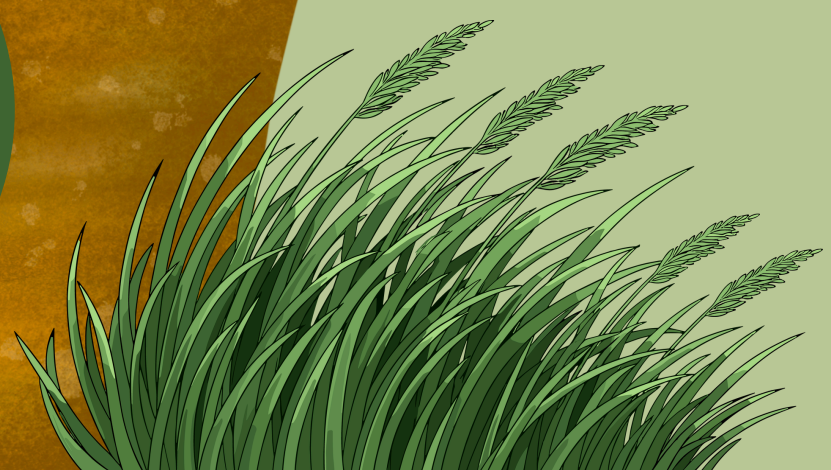
1

GROWING PAINS

By Melissa M. Carlson

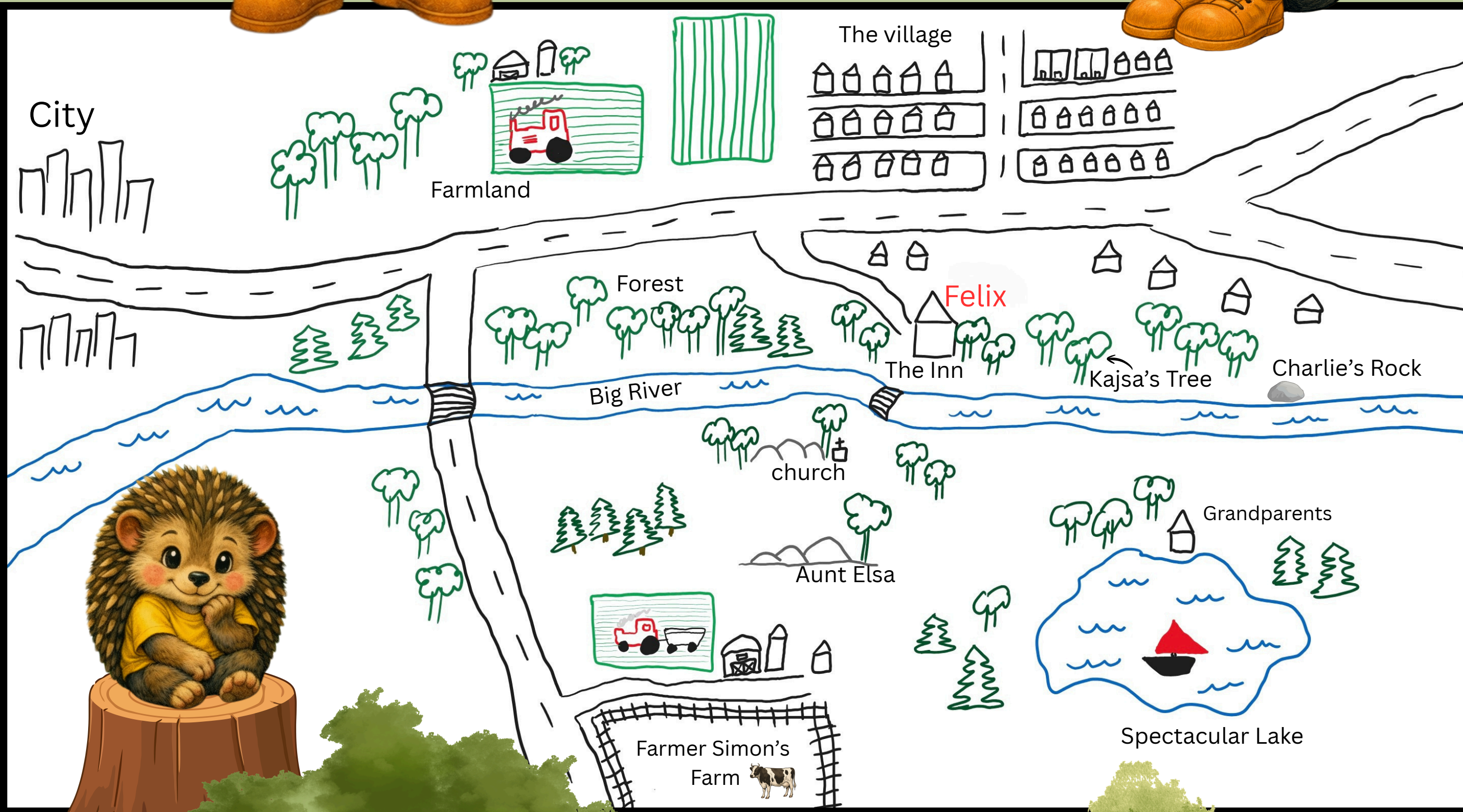


Felix and Friends:
The Fruit of the Spirit Series





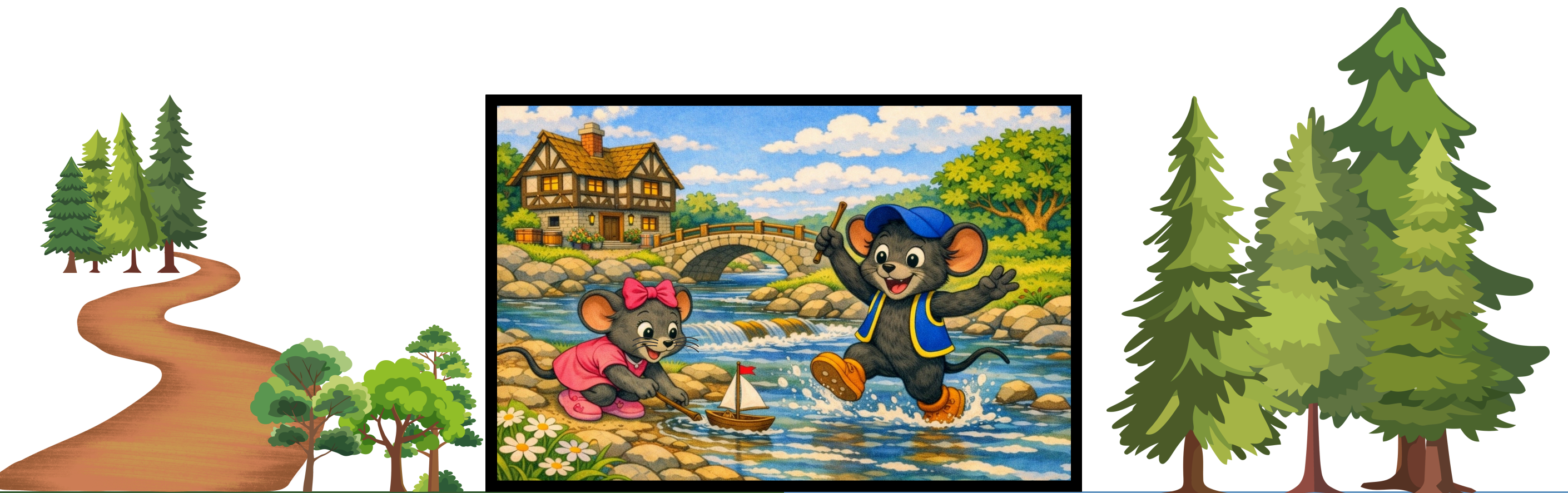
Map of Felix's World





Felix ran down the well-worn path from the inn to the river, his whiskers twitching in anticipation. The young mouse had just heard from his friend Kajsa the Jackdaw that his father was nearly home. Hans, Felix's father, had been visiting his brother in the city for the past couple of weeks. Felix had longed to go with his dad on this particular trip, but the journey there and back was full of dangers for a mouse, so he had not been allowed to go.

Felix had spent his whole life in the country, living with his parents and younger sister, Märta, in the walls of a charming country inn near the banks of the Big River. He enjoyed spending his days exploring the wooded area along the river, playing with his friends, and visiting his Aunt Elsa, who lived in a hole nestled deep within a mound of boulders near Farmer Simon's wheat field. Felix also loved visiting his grandparents by Spectacular Lake whenever he got the chance. The lake was far too far for him to go by himself, but his family made sure to visit often.





Felix's uncle, his father's older brother Harry, had lived in the city for as long as Felix could remember. Harry had fallen in love with a city mouse, Anna, who had one day sneaked off to the country in a bread truck. She had been looking for adventure and new possibilities, and she found everything she was wanting in Harry. The two mice were married and soon moved to the city. Felix had hardly ever seen them. They didn't visit often, and Felix, of course, had never been to see them. Harry and Anna had a son, Patrik, who was the same age as Felix, but the distance left little opportunity for the boys to get to know each other. Hans, however, tried to visit his brother at least once every other year or so.

Felix had missed his father a lot while he was away and was so excited—and more than ready—to have him home again. He had tons of things planned for the two of them, and so much he wanted to tell his dad. The past weeks had felt like forever as far as Felix was concerned. He had waited and waited—and now the wait was just about over. His dad was nearly home!





“He’s coming! He’s coming!” Felix squealed in total delight, and he ran as fast as his small feet could carry him down the dusty path to the little dock where his father would soon arrive by boat.

He was sprinting so quickly that he nearly tripped over his own paws a time or two in his haste to reach his father. Felix’s friend, Kajsa the Jackdaw, was flying boisterous circles above him. She knew how much Felix had missed his father and could hardly contain the joy she felt for her friend.

She swooped down low to fly even with Felix and smiled.

“I saw his raft coming just past the old cabin,” she announced with delight.

“Hooray!” Felix rejoiced breathlessly, winded from his quickened pace. “I can’t wait to see him, Kajsa! It’s been way too long. I’ve missed him so much.”

Kajsa smiled knowingly and encouraged him along.

“Well, you don’t have to wait much longer,” she sang out, flying higher to get a better look.

“I see him! I see him!” she cried out a moment later. “He isn’t far now.”

“Really?!” managed Felix, as he pushed himself to sprint just a little faster.

“Oh, I wish I could fly so I could see everything you can,” he panted. “You have the best view. I can’t see through all the trees.”

“Just keep following the river!” Kajsa cheered. “He’s almost to the dock. You can meet him there!”





Felix picked up the pace, covering the distance in record time. He arrived at the dock just as his father's little boat pulled alongside. Felix danced impatiently in place as he waited for his father to climb out and secure the boat carefully with a thick rope. Then, unable to wait a moment more, he flung himself into his father's arms, nearly tackling him in the process.

"I've missed you, Dad!" he whispered. "So very much!"

Hans chuckled warmly and hugged his boy tight.

"Well, I have certainly missed you too, son," he murmured. "It's good to be home."

In all of the commotion and excitement of the moment, Felix had yet to notice the small, quiet mouse peering tentatively over the edge of the boat. But as Felix turned to help his father gather his things, he jumped with a start. "Oh!" he stammered in surprise. "Who are you?"

Hans stepped over and put a warm paw on his son's shoulder.

"Felix, this is your cousin, Patrik," he said. Then he turned to the quiet mouse now stepping warily up onto the edge of the dock, his small satchel clutched tightly in his paws. "Patrik, come on over here and say hello to Felix."

Patrik took one cautious step forward and muttered a barely audible greeting.

Felix, feeling suddenly uncertain, managed a tentative nod of his own.

"So, um, Patrik," he said slowly, "I didn't know you were coming to visit."

At that, Patrik made a strangled little noise in his throat and dipped his head lower. Felix glanced over at his father at once, confused at his cousin's response and unsure how to proceed. Hans gave him a small, sad smile. He looked from one boy to the other and took a deep breath.

"Well, son, Patrik isn't just here for a visit," he began.

"What do you mean, Dad?" Felix asked, instantly alert and feeling unexplainably anxious.

Hans lovingly reached out and gently squeezed his son's shoulder.

"Patrik is going to be living with us from now on," he explained. He opened his mouth to continue, but Felix jumped in at once.

"Living with us?" Felix repeated, completely flabbergasted. "For, like... forever?"

He started to panic, pacing nervously back and forth across the width of the short dock.

"But doesn't he have his own family to live with?" he pressed. "Why does he have to stay here?"

Before Hans could reply, Patrik—tired of all the dramatics—stepped forward irritably.

"Well, I'm not exactly thrilled about this either," he said testily. He gripped his bag tighter and looked toward the path just off the dock.

"I'm sure I can find my own way from here," he muttered, and pushed past Felix at once.

Felix watched, mouth gaping open in surprise, as his cousin stormed down the path toward the inn.





“What’s the matter with him?” Felix mumbled grumpily, deeply irritated that nothing about his father’s return had gone according to plan.

Hans sighed sadly and turned to his son.

“Felix, you really could have been nicer to Patrik,” he admonished.

“But Dad,” Felix began, “you said he’s staying here. With us.” Then his eyes grew wider as a sudden realization hit him. “I’m not going to have to share my room, am I? And why did he get to travel with you anyway? He’s the same age as me. You said it was too dangerous. It isn’t fair.”

“Felix,” Hans said firmly, breaking off his son’s rant.

Felix stopped talking at once. He knew better than to argue. He knew that tone. Now was definitely the time to listen.

Hans closed his eyes for a moment, as if trying to find just the right words. Then he took a deep breath and stepped closer to his son. Felix felt a sudden worry take root in his heart. Something was clearly wrong. He couldn’t remember ever seeing his father look this sad.

“What’s the matter?” he whispered, concerned.

“Patrik’s parents were killed by a cat last week,” Hans finally said gently, his eyes mournful and his whiskers drooping.

Felix felt his mouth drop open. So that was it. It was worse than anything he had imagined.

His father continued quietly.

“Patrik doesn’t have anyone else—no other family—and he will be staying with us. You two boys can share a room. It won’t hurt you to be kind. And I do expect you to be kind. Understood?”

“Yes, sir,” Felix nodded. Then he added softly, “I’m sorry about Uncle Harry and Aunt Anna. I didn’t know.” A lone tear rolled down his cheek, catching in his whiskers.

“I know you didn’t,” Hans said, lovingly wiping the tear from his son’s face with a tender paw.

The two stood in silence for a moment, letting the reality sink in. Then Hans put his arm around his son’s shoulders and sighed.

“Come on, son. Let’s go up to the house and check on Patrik. And then I think it’s time we fill the rest of the family in.”

Felix nodded miserably and followed his father up the path towards home.





As the days went on, Felix struggled with the new arrangement. He felt annoyed at having to share his space—and jealous of all the attention his father was giving to Patrik. His irritation mixed with guilt for feeling annoyed, and that only frustrated him further. He sat and sulked, seeking sympathy from his friend Charlie the hedgehog.

“Ahh, Charlie,” Felix moaned, “what am I going to do? It’s only been a few days, and I’m already going crazy! It just isn’t fair. Why does Dad have to spend so much time doing stuff with Patrik?”

Charlie smiled at his friend. He knew how hard Felix had been grappling with his cousin’s unexpected arrival.

“You know, your dad did invite you to go with them on a walk just now,” he reminded Felix gently. “You could have gone with them.”

“Oh, sure. Take their side,” Felix grouched.

“I’m not taking sides,” said Charlie carefully. “Just making observation.” He paused thoughtfully before continuing.

“I think Patrik is probably pretty sad about losing his family. It’s a good thing your dad is doing—encouraging him and being there for him. He’s probably been feeling very alone.”

Felix sighed and nodded in reluctant agreement. He did feel guilty about being jealous and upset with his cousin while Patrik was going through so much. He knew he wasn’t exactly being fair. But the whole situation was just too much.

“I know,” Felix replied. “I just miss how things were before. I don’t like all this change.”

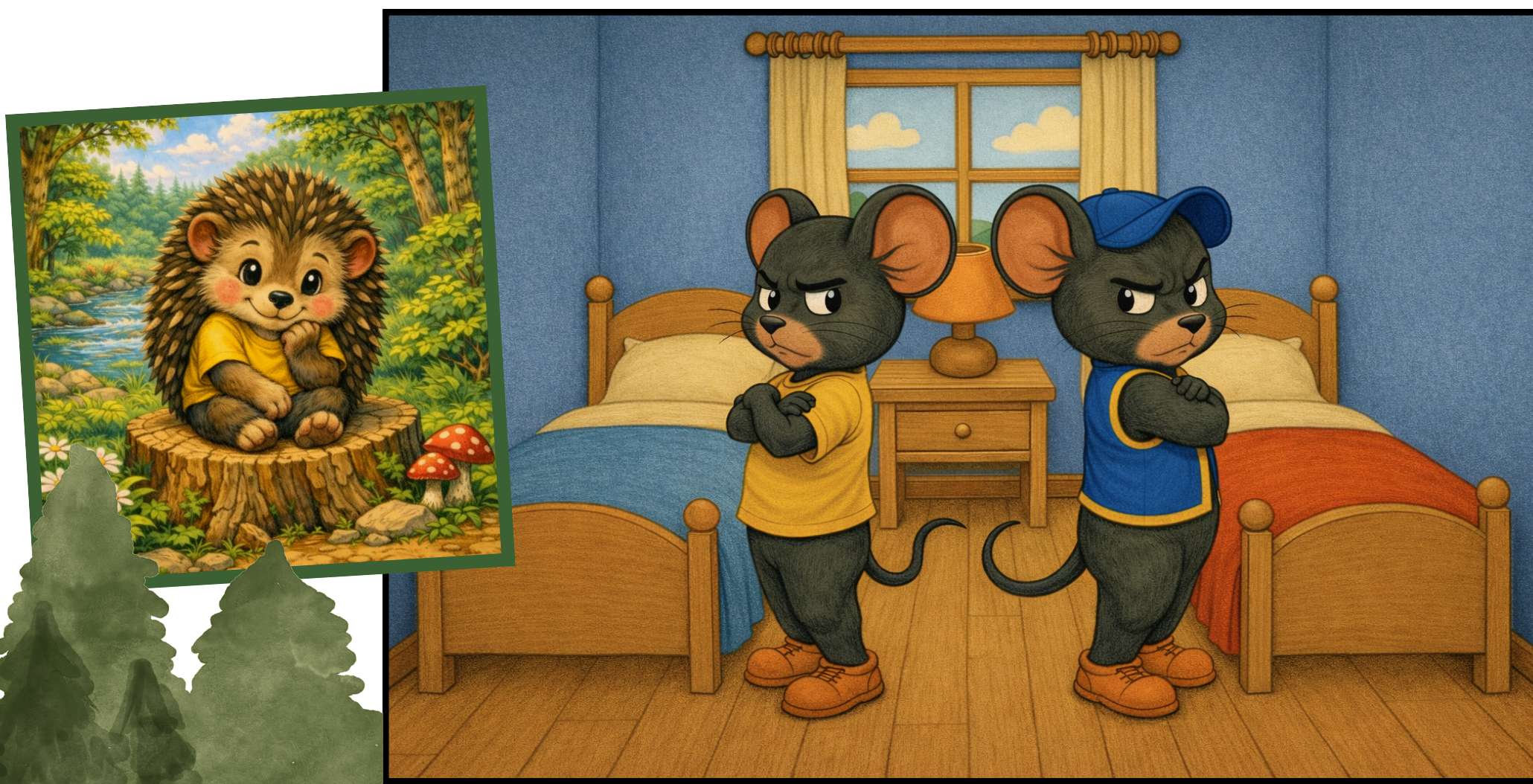
Charlie nodded.

“Change is hard. There’s no denying that. But it doesn’t have to be all bad, does it?” he asked. “I mean, isn’t it kind of cool to get to spend time with your cousin? It’s like having a brother, isn’t it? Or like having a friend around all the time?”

Felix huffed wearily at that.

“Oh, please, I already have a sister,” he retorted. “And I have plenty of friends—like you.”

He let out a long, irritated sigh. “Who needs Patrik?” he muttered bitterly.





Charlie just stared at his friend and let the bitter words sink in.

“Wow,” he said at last. “It seems like you could use a dose of what we were talking about at church a couple of weeks ago.”

“What do you mean?” asked Felix cautiously.

Charlie smiled. “The Fruit of the Spirit. I mean, you seem to have some of the rotten fruit down: strife, jealousy, anger, rivalries, envy, division...”

“Oh, come on!” Felix interrupted, rolling his eyes.

“Well, I’m right, aren’t I?” insisted Charlie. “Be honest now.”

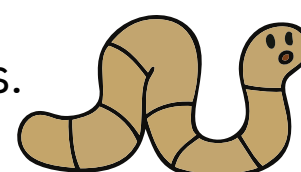
Felix sighed but immediately started to think back on the past few days.

He knew Charlie was right. Charlie often was.

Felix winced as he recalled his own jealousy and anger toward his cousin.

He thought about the unkind things he had said and done.

Patrik needed a friend, but Felix had treated him like an unwanted enemy.



“You’re right, Charlie,” Felix agreed with a sad nod. “But how am I supposed to just change how I feel?”

“By changing how you think!” Charlie answered at once. “And by replacing all that rotten fruit with good fruit—the Fruit of the Spirit, like love, joy, peace and so on.

“You do have a choice in this. You can choose to be kind in what you say to others.”

“You make it sound so easy.”

“I know it’s not easy, Felix,” Charlie acknowledged. “But why don’t you ask God to help you with your heart and attitude? He can, you know.”

Felix smiled a sad but genuine smile.

“You’re right,” he said. “I guess I can try. And I will.” He turned and looked up at his friend.

“And maybe you can help me too?” he asked hopefully.

“Of course!” Charlie declared without hesitation. “What are friends for?”

Felix chuckled. He was so very thankful for his friend.

“All right then,” he said with a determined grin. “What is this list of fruit that I need to be working on?”

Charlie smiled wide. “I’ll get my Bible and we can look together!”





But the fruit of the Spirit is

Love Joy
Peace Longsuffering
Gentleness
Goodness
Faith
Meekness
Temperance

Against such there is no law.
Galatians 5:22-23



2026

Pictures produced via AI through ChatGPT and Canva.