



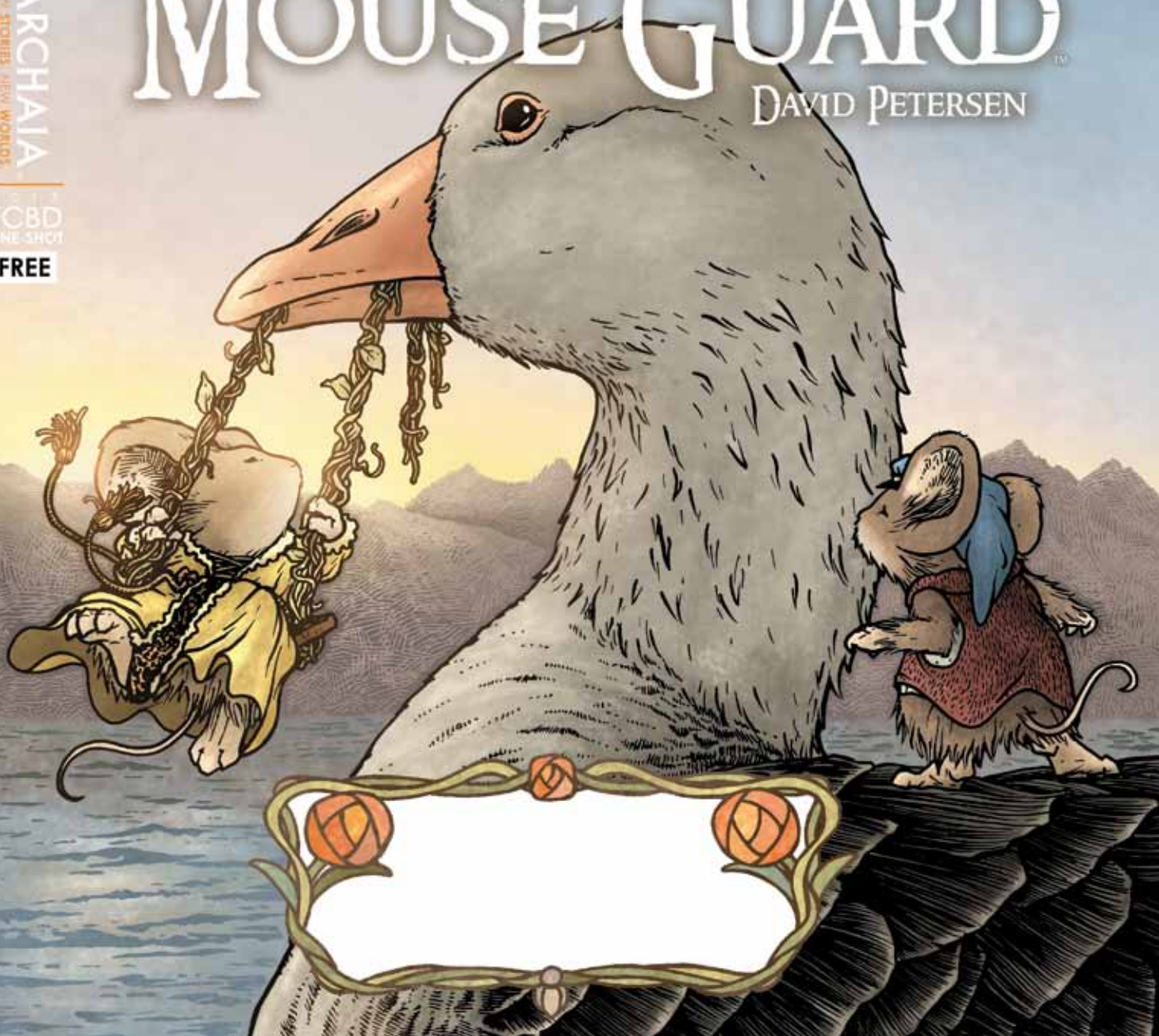
FREE COMIC BOOK DAY

MOUSE GUARD™

DAVID PETERSEN

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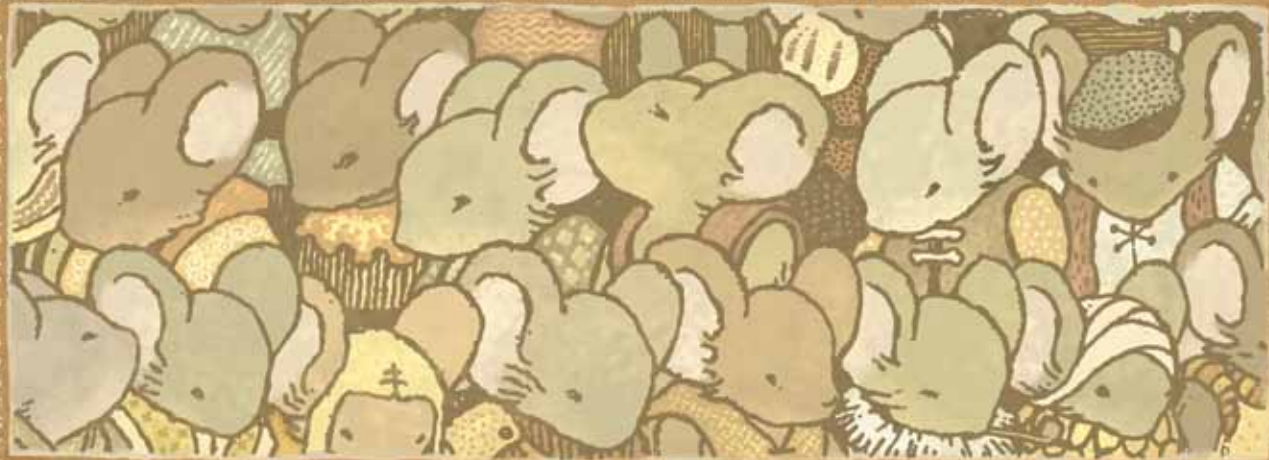


She was the most beautiful of mice. Her fur was the color of spun copper and glistened and shone in a way that made all around her the richer just for looking. However, beauty was only a sliver of her sum. She was as talented with a hammer as she was with a ladle, and no mouse could match her ability with either or at any trade in between. As any beast could attest, if they had lived to tell you, she was three times again as skilled with a bow or a blade.



At
all things
she was good.

She was not short on suitors, for no mouse was more desired than she. So, cleverly she devised a test for finding a mouse worthy of her love, which surely was greater than the love that could be given by any other mouse. When her challenge began, the field of hopefuls occupied an entire meadow. And she asked them to match her in many many tasks.



At smithing swords, no weapon was finer than hers. And more than half of the participants walked away early, knowing their blades to be inferior. When cooking stew, none proved to be tastier than hers, and ashamed of their waste of ingredients and time, the herd of mice was greatly thinned again.



At
any skill named, the
beauty would best the others. However, with
her manners, she never boasted of her own good
work nor spoke badly of their failures. She would quickly
announce the next event and move on to it.



Even if a mouse had done extraordinarily well in one test, they'd become discouraged enough at the next and walk away with a half-broken heart, for they knew no mouse would be as good at so many things as she.