

The Hope Folios #9



THE BETWEEN

Episode 23½: Merriweather's return



Plus...

1977 and all that

A wander with Margaret

And... collect all of Hope Folios #9!



Ah, you're still here!

It's been a while since I teed up an episode, and I thought you humans would have cleared off by now.

If you want my opinion - which people (and mice) sadly rarely do - this is a rather tender episode. So tread carefully.

I won't keep you, as I can see you're itching to get reading. But be wary of story that softens you up, it's bound to end with a nasty bite.

Don't say I didn't warn you.

Raz, Editor and Compère
Underground Mice Writers Society





This issue...

Episode 23½: Merriweather's return (p4)

1977 and all that (p16)

A wander with Margaret (p20)

The story continues (p30)

Quill & Ink
Press

Sub editor:
Locket

Chief reporter:
Whippet

Staff writer:
Smagg

Photo editor:
Mr Tremendous

Editor:
Raz

Design & layout:
Tomalin

Reporter:
Nonsense

Photographer:
Nonsense

Printed in the UK by
The Underground Music
Writers Society

THE BETWEEN

Episode 23½: Merriweather's return

The holloway had finally dropped Merriweather at the foot of Dunster Castle. He climbed the stairs to his apartment and opened the door. It was early morning. Quiet. Tidy.

"Corfe!"

"Oh, hello crow! Good to see you, too. Are you the only one home? Where is Hazel?"

The crow tapped the windowsill on which he stood, turned and took flight, out into the rising light of the day.

"Hazel! Clarke!"

No answer. The dormouse walked through each of

the rooms, to his study. Nobody. Strange. Then he jumped when Clarke's head popped up through the open trap door.

"Clarkee!"

"Oh, hello Merriweather. I thought I heard you come in."

The pair hugged warmly, with a soft kiss of whiskers. The young Master of Maps gazed into his partner's eyes. "You look tired, Clarkee. Have you been on the hooch?"

"What? Goodness, no!"

The Keeper of



Cartography dropped his gaze.

They wandered back to the lounge, and Merriweather peered around the yawning room. "Where's Hazel? I want to tell her, I saw a magnificent silver owl flying over the holloway in the night. And I have gifts!"

"Merriweather..."

"Look, I found a most beautiful pebble for you, my love. When dry, it's as monochrome as Forget. But add water and it curves light into rainbow. Pure Nostalgia."

Clarke took the stone, and his companion's front foot with it. Held them both, pressed between his feet. "Merriweather..."

"I have something for..."

"Hazel is..."

Merriweather held up an empty blue eggshell. "It's





a starling's egg. Hazel loves starlings!"

"I know, my love, but..." A tear grazed Clarke's cheek.

"I need to give this to her. Where is she?"
Merriweather tapped an impatient foot. "Where is my sister?"

Clarke grasped the dormouse's shoulders. "My darling, please, listen to me..."

Merriweather's smile hung, suspended, in mid-air. "Clarke? What is it? What's going on?"

"I am so sorry, my love. Hazel is..."

Merriweather began to tremble.

"You see, there was a vole... an assassin, or so Montgomery told it. And tea... poison in her tea... you see..."

"My dear Clarkee, I do not see! You, you have been dreaming. Asleep down in the Map Room. It is a strange place. Plays with one's mind, see? Hazel is probably down there too. Having a doze. Or exploring the holloway?"

"My love, I know it is hard to take, but..."

"Hazel! Hazel!"
Merriweather rushed from room to room, his desperate cries meeting only silence. At last, the dormouse slumped upon the sofa, his head bowed. "Maybe she's gone out... maybe she has... gone..."

Clarke sat down too, enclosing Merriweather in a soft embrace. "I know it's hard, my love, it's



hard... But, please believe me. I am so sorry. Yes, Hazel is gone... gone away... for good."

The Master of Maps held out the empty eggshell. His tears splashed upon its blue. "But she loves... she loves... loved..." His heart shrank and fell away.

Thoreau closed his eyes, leaned on his stick, wished the Bookworm away.

The holloway blew a flurry of familiar seasoning around him. A pinch of winter. A dash of spring. An ounce of

summer. A sprinkling of autumn. A scatter of leaf blown bird song.

"I'm still here! Whether you close your peepers or not."

The mouse opened his eyes, frowned at the worm. "So you are."

"Though I'd prefer not to be. I'm trying to keep a low profile. I've appeared far too much in this story, for an elusive bookworm. Have you ever opened a book and discovered a grub? No, I thought not! The eaten remains of the book. Yes. But the wriggler itself? No. As I



said to that dormouse friend of yours..."

"Merriweather?"

"That's the fella. Yes, I was saying to Mr Merriweather that, at this rate, I may end up eating myself. **Still, have courage, we're so close to the end now. We might survive!**"

"The end?" Thoreau shrank around his stick.

"Yes, there's just a handful of chapters left. Fewer if I get really hungry."

"Goodness me. Whatever happened to keeping a low profile? Now, if you

will, which way did Merriweather go?"

"That way!" The worm pointed, confidently.

"Unless it was that way..." He smiled beneath his monocle. "Both ways are very similar, aren't they? A curve of leafy trees. They catch the same breeze from the flicker of pages. The same storm from a slam of covers. Wherever you turn, a buzz of a reader raises the bees, a song of birds explodes from every bush when they sneeze."

"Ahem!" Thoreau shuffled impatiently. "I shall go this way, as it is downhill. I'm not as young as I was a few pages ago. And I'll be even older by the time you finish talking."

"Oh, well then, good luck!" The worm watched the old mouse shuffle away, then turned his magnified eye to a glitter of sun above the trees. "Well, dear reader," he smiled, "I do believe I'm





done. Nearly time for me to pupate. I'll just have a little snack, to see me through to the next story. Just a little nibble. Just one, last b..."

...

The cabinet was empty, a ghostly hall of moonlit china, almost devoid of mice. Almost. Gladstone's eyes haunted the silence. **The great Coronation Teapot seemed full of echoes of his failure**, the cups with unpoured opportunity. The gravy boat was strangely vacant. Where was Flax? Surely not still in Dunster?

The Keeper of Polite Conversations slumped into the chair behind the rat's imposing desk, lost among might-have-beens. The paraphernalia of power. His front paws rested on the Secretary's bureau. A phantom of dogsbodies floated before him. A pretend of Keepers rushing to do his bidding. But, stronger than these, was the imagine of a disappointing shake of the Duke's head.

The numbers just didn't stack up. With Thoreau and Marsha missing, gone who knows where. Hazel dead. Clarke absent. He



needed three Greater Keepers to bring about a vote of no confidence. And without that...

A giggle of mischief rattled the gloom and, with racing heart, Gladstone leapt behind Flax's chair.

"Shhh!" Floated a mousey voice.

"There's no one here, Roppo!" Giggled another.

Shadows appeared at the far end of the cabinet. Gladstone slipped into a litter of tobacco in the gravy boat. "Filthy habit!" He muttered.

The voices drew nearer. The giggles grew louder. The Keeper held his breath, a thin curve of porcelain between him and the intruders.

A pop of a lid. A hiss of spray paint. "Tuch! You've made him too fat!"

"He is fat, Ropp. A big round face." More hissing.

"That's a rubbish pipe!"

Roppo and Tucha! Of course, thought Gladstone. The Lesser Keepers of Graffiti. He peeped over the top of the boat, and watched the two pygmy mice spraying a rather large, rather comical portrait of Montgomery Flax onto the rat's office wall.

"What on Earth are you doing?" Gladstone bellowed. **The pair spun round, dropped their spray cans, and gawped at the mouse climbing out of the gravy boat.**

The Greater Keeper straightened his suit, brushed off twirls of





tobacco, and walked between the terrified vandals. He studied their freshly sprayed portrait of the world's most famous rat. "Not. Very. Flattering. Is it?"

The Lesser mouths struggled for consonants, gasped for verbs.

Gladstone picked up one of the cans and added a blue moustache.

"That's better!"

The pygmy mice suddenly burst out laughing.

"Oh, very good, Mr Gladstone!" Roppo fizzed.

"A moustache! Of course!" Bubbled Tucha.

Gladstone suddenly fixed them both with a stern eye. "Think it's funny do you?"

The pygmies fell silent. "No..."

The Greater Keeper grinned. "I'm jesting with you... Possibly. That is to say... What on Earth are you doing?"

"It was her idea, Mr Gladstone, Sir!" Roppo prodded Tucha in the belly.

"Mine? It was both our ideas. Since the vote..."

"Vote?" Gladstone's heart began to race.

"Yes. Yesterday. Everyone was wondering where you were." Roppo looked around as if someone was listening.

"Where I was?" The mouse pocketed his front feet. "I was enjoying some alone time after the shock of Hazel."

"Oh yes. You were there when it happened, weren't you, Mr Gladstone?"



The Keeper of Polite Conversations put a front foot on Tucha's shoulder. "Which vote?"

"A vote of no confidence in Flax." The pair burst out.

"A what?"

Roppa was about to explain, but Tucha planted herself in front of her sister: "Emmit and Drinkwater brought it about. There was quite a commotion in the chamber when the news broke of all the goings on at Dunster. They said it was time mice were led

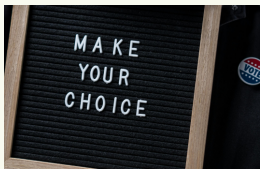
by mice, and they were wondering where you were."

Roppo's head popped over Tucha's shoulder. "They needed a third Keeper to make it stick!"

Gladstone's eyes hardened.

Tucha elbowed Roppo. "But then Humboldt added his voice, said it was Flax's fault Hazel was dead."

"So, the motion passed?" The Greater Keeper's face tightened.



"Candidates are to put their names forward. There will be a vote in a month's time." Roppo sat on the Secretary's chair, and her sister twirled her around in a burst of laughter.

Gladstone felt a fire in his belly, a spring in his step. "So, where's Flax?"

"Don't you know, Sir?" Tucha cried from a dizzying spin. "Flax has resigned. He's left. Gone!"

"Merriweather! Merriweather! Wait!" Clarke chased the stricken dormouse through the trap door and down the winding stair, into the breeze of the Map of Life.

"A vole!" Merriweather gasped. "A vole killed Hazel?"

"So they said," huffed Clarke. "Female. About so high... called... Buttertuff,



Bitterbreath,
Buttersnuff..."

"Butterworth!" Spat the Master of Maps.

"That's it. Wait a minute! How did you guess?"

"I met her," Merriweather stood before his creation, **searching the wriggling line of the holloway.**

"And I was very pleasant to her... very kind... too kind..."

"You met her?" Clarke frowned.

"Yes!" The dormouse sobbed with rage. "I didn't know! She seemed so harmless. She must be in there still.



Somewhere. Surely she didn't run fast enough to...?

Clarke peered at the map. "I can see a set of prints. But they're moving very slowly. The name is faint. Hard to read. As if it's fading away." He clutched Merriweather's front foot. "Are you going after her?"

"No." The Master of Maps shook his head. **"You know the holloway doesn't work like that. She's trying to take the vole home. She won't help me. No matter how much I..."**



"So, what are you going to do?"

"Something I've never done before. I don't even know if it's possible."

"What?"

But Merriweather was too consumed to reply. His eyes were dark. His brow furrowed. His mouth clenched. He stretched up and worked the holloway between his fingers, curved it, felt it resist, felt a north wind of anger whip along its length. He watched the footprints pause, stumble left and right, then pause again. He grinned as he imagined Butterworth's fear.

"Merriweather, darling... what are you doing?"

"Go back upstairs Clarke. Best you don't see..."

But, my love, this is wrong. It's not our place..."

"Quiet!"



"You can't bring Hazel back..."

"No, but I'm going to make the guilty pay!"

The holloway twisted and writhed, wrestled under Merriweather's will. The footprints spun in circles, bounced hard of tree trunks and rocks, then froze. Upturned. Still as stone. On the cool floor of the ancient path.

"An eye for an eye, Clarkee. An eye for an eye." The young mouse turned tail and began to carry his grief, slowly, up the stairs.

The Keeper of Cartography was left behind, on his knees, fearful eyes fixed on the map. A map that should breathe life, but now led to almost certain death.

To be continued...

++From the++

Hope Codex

+++++

Merriweather:

Brilliant with topology, if it relates to maps and not human nature. Brother of Hazel. Yin to Clarke's Yang.

+++++

Clarke: Keeper of Maps. Rather too young-at-heart for his limbs or his serious job. Gleefully adores Merriweather.

+++++

Bookworm:

Voracious appetite, strong opinions and a rather fine monocle. Has a tendency to chew holes in plots.

+++++

Holloway: An old, sunken pathway with serious attitude. Or maybe it's a hole the Bookworm chewed in the story?

+++++

Hope Codex



1977

For those of us that remember, even an young mouse like me, 1977 was quite a year. Us mice were busy, as you know, trying to stop a bunch of quarrelsome Nelsons and a grouchy Nun, and that exciteable pair Boy and Violet, from creating all sorts of mayhem between Nostalgia and Forget. Okay, ahem, so our dear Hazel caused more harm than you humans ever did, by stealing Bream's Theorem. But her intentions were good.

I could say more, but this story still has further to run. I don't want to spoil the plot. And, by the way, any holes you may find in said plot are purely down to a certain hungry Bookworm.

I believe he ate himself in the end, but nobody is sure.



and all that



As for our Queenie, in between Jubilee hangovers, she went on a worldwide tour that took in the wonderful islands of the Pacific. You know the ones. Fiji, Togo, Samoa. I'm sure she found her way to Africa, too, and the vast nation of Canada, among others. Throughout her travels we kept her informed about the missing Theorem and the 'stolen' Codex. She was not amused.

As for births, I seem to remember a certain Donald Trump Junior taking his first gasp and cry... though his father's name escapes me. I'm sure you know the fella.

BOOM!

What was that... oh yes, don't panic. That was Concorde, breaking the sound barrier on its





maiden flight from London to New York.

What's that? Thirsty, are you? Well, don't worry, you can buy a can of coke for just 11 pence. Same price as a pint of milk. Things were cheaper back then, but so were we. Average weekly wages for a manual worker in the UK were a measly £70.

Worryingly, thanks to all of the shenanigans with the Theorem being stolen, 1977 was also the year you humans began to notice us mice. Why, Lady Dunster even made it into a mouse Episode... oh, you don't know about that yet? Ahem, pretend I didn't mention

it, or the Duke will have my guts for dental floss.

We had to come up with a distraction strategy, a way to hide us from your noticing, you see? So, we invented these yellow smiley faces. You might know the ones. They pepper your so-called smart phones. Emoji, you named them. But that's a word we invented. The 'm' in it stands for mouse. The other letters, well, they're secret. But you can be sure, where there's an emoji, there's a mouse hiding behind it. I shouldn't have told you that, should I?

Anyway, the distraction worked. People stopped noticing us, and they felt



happy about it, too, which was a bonus.

And then, would you believe it, you started creating mouse-sized humans (and aliens, I guess) in the form of the first Star Wars action figures. They're worth a fortune now. If only we had invited them into our mouse holes, but we were far too suspicious of these little people – they might have been spies.

You guys really were getting so clever, though a smidgen of it was thanks to us mice whispering in your ears here and there. Kodak created the world's first digital camera in 1977, but then decided it

wouldn't catch on and abandoned it. If only they could have seen the rest of the dots that make up your phone, we did try to tell them.

1977 also saw a major breakthrough in DNA sequencing, micro computers, and MRI scanning technology. As we said before, it was a turning point in history. It's how we got here. And by here, we mean Episode 23%.

Well, 1978 and beyond is fast approaching... hold tight! The future is coming. Won't be long before we are past it.

**Lady Fyffe,
Murine Education &
Engagement Officer**



Writing community focus: [@fhaedra](#)

A wander with Margaret

Thanks to a hungry bookworm, this lovely interview slipped down a hole in Episode 21% and landed here.

I've lost my way

*shaken off the
deliberate*

I've heard rumour

dizziness subsides

*My discarded
costume*

looks lonesome

Sometimes change

necessitates

turning

without

looking back

#LossLit

3 November 2022

The narrator of your very moving poem reminds us of the vole, Butterworth, who wanders lost and confused into Episode 21% of *The Between*. Can you tell us more about the pivotal moment in this verse, and what you found in its telling? Do you think we need to lose our past to reach our future?

Well, I think we can learn plenty from reviewing our past, but I am definitely a strong advocate for living in the here and now.

What is that little jingle? The past is gone. The future's yet to be. All we have resides in now, this moment, and what our eyes can see.

Something like that. I might have made it up.



That said, I suppose the poem expresses the narrator's knowledge that life's a work in progress. Through the presence of memory we're inextricably attached to the past while concurrently striving for a higher awareness, perpetually seeking an understanding that the only way forward resides in the ability let it all go. It's an aspiration of course, never an attainment for we mere mortals.

You write both poems and songs, and sometimes your poems become songs. What, for you, are the most important similarities and differences between these two forms of expression? And are there any songwriters you particularly admire who share the art of poetry through song?

Many of my poems arrive with melodies — I walk/hike a lot and the rhythm of my steps regularly inspires a melody and

then lyrics/poems sneak in to accompany — this part is a bit of a challenge to describe. Lots of times what arrives is pure nonsense but you have to start somewhere.

Music is a major influence in my writing. Even if they don't really become songs, I often sing my poems to gauge how the phrasing, the rhythm of each piece, is working.

Probably it doesn't apply to all poetry of course, but I tend to think poems are songs and songs are poetry. Poems may be published on a page more often than released as a recording but they require voice to bring them fully to life. At least for me they do. Voice, the sound of a poem being read, or a song sung, is key for me.

Both poems and songs attempt to communicate something to the recipient, to evoke a response of some kind, maybe to challenge, to inform, to entertain, to engage or enrage.





I've heard it said that a truly fine poem attempts to present or reveal a view of its subject that the reader may not have yet considered. But so often a song, at least the ones with thoughtful lyrics, provoke a listener to see something new as well, only with the additional layer which is the music. Both forms express and/or expound upon our human experience. I suppose I'm not really answering the question very well. I can't separate poetry and song.

Songwriters, yes. So many to consider. The ones I admire most tend to be poetic, painting stories with melodies, their content not necessarily easy to analyze. For example, Dylan has always been on my list of intriguing writers. His work is compelling for so many reasons that I'll just leave any attempt to explain to the wind. John Prine, for his poignant description of the human condition, somehow drawing beauty from tragic circumstance or empathy for a character the greater world seems to barely have noticed.

I think the best writing is the stuff that reaches us in the place within ourselves we don't always have a name for. We just know when we read or hear that kind of content, that it's real, it matters, and we are moved by the privilege of having encountered it. We are grateful and, sometimes through such encounters, we are also changed. It's the reason we return to



stones but I think any unexpected found things are grand. I once found a tiny box tucked into a tree trunk along a trail on one of the Gulf Islands. There was a string with a key to open the box and inside was a note inviting the finder to select and take an object while leaving one behind.

The idea of the exchange of small treasures (stones/buttons/poems/ribbons/dolls) among stranger humans amused me. I like the feel of connection. I do find there are treasures everywhere. You must simply look. Of course, you must remember to periodically gaze up at the sky as well.



You are particularly fond of #readmespeakme, created by @megwaf, where different people record their reading of a selected poem. Could you tell us a bit more about why the reading of a poem aloud is important to you? And how does it feel when you hear someone reading one of your poems?

I am so completely fascinated by voices, as mentioned previously. #readmespeakme is such a fine project and I definitely enjoyed participating in it from the beginning when the amazing @megwaf initiated it in about 2018. For me, poetry must be read aloud in order for its full potential to be realized. Words on a page cry out for expression and interpretation. When I read poems aloud, I am usually walking around (not necessarily in circles, but sometimes). I especially like reading aloud outdoors and have a few spaces perfect for



that practice. The birds seem to like poetry, too.

I consider being read and interpreted by another a true honour. There are exceptions I suppose, but I haven't found anything but true wonder at hearing someone else read one of my pieces aloud, particularly when they've not yet heard me read it. The way [#readmespeakme](#) works, as you know, is that the author reads last so each unique interpretation is presented without the influence of the original author's voice/delivery to interfere. It makes for some interesting moments of discovery! Once a poem is released into the wilds, it belongs to everyone anyway, doesn't it?



Returning to Episode 21%, Butterworth is escaping from a terror via the holloway, a sunken path that runs through the Between. Could you share the story of any ancient ways that run across Vancouver Island, where you live? And have you wandered along them?

I am privileged to live on an island rich in cultural history as introduced, practiced, and preserved by the First Nations peoples, the original occupiers of all this wonder. There is much to learn about our vast natural landscape and the mighty seas that separate us from the mainland. I would say that I am an infant, a very willing student, just beginning to learn of ancient ways and knowledge from those whose wisdom has for a long while been undervalued but now is rising. I'm one of those works-in-progress you might hear about, wandering slowly into a greater awareness.



Your delightful, tiny, vss tales are populated by an assortment of interesting characters, from 'Girl, 33, who looked like a fragile old woman' to Nell, who rarely spoke but suddenly wants to tell a story, and Little Martha in an ice cream queue in Quebec. Are these portraits pure imagination, or are they drawn from experience? What, for you, makes a character come alive in story or poem?

Oh, let me think about how best to answer this question. Everything and every character I create is pure imagination speckled with covert insertions of places I've been, experiences I've lived, and persons I might once have been or wanted to be or pretended to be. There have been a few instances where I've been less than aware of the bits of reality I've inserted into a piece until later review. We are so many people, I think, and



capable of drifting into a great variety of circumstances if we choose to surrender to possibilities.

I like a character who is at once quite ordinary and slightly quirky. Do you know the Kinks' song, 'I'm Not Like Everybody Else?'. Yes, that. A character who either views the world in a unique manner or strives to – I don't know – find out something more than the mediocre or the obvious. A seeker. I'm always attracted to a seeker. Someone who, while slightly afraid of what may come of a penchant for exploration, is compelled to step forward anyway. To the edge to see what can be seen just over there beyond view.





Can you tell us about a vss you particularly admire, and explain why you love it?

There have been several standouts over the years I've invested in reading vss contributions online. So full of content is my memory, it's tough to recall the best of some of these. Creatives and the stories they manage to impart in so few words fascinate and delight me always. The tiny stories [@voimaoy](#) contributes to the public sphere captivate me each time I read one. The human attributes, including the wry senses of humour, gifted to her animal characters (don't forget

the rock with teeth), combined with their astute analysis of their world – whether the subject be the most innocuous or more substantial – makes every read entertaining, thoughtful and relevant. I like that combination. I admire that she accomplishes so much with such brevity.

Our Between is interrupted at various points by a hungry bookworm, nibbling through the story.

What's the most interesting thing you've discovered between the covers of a book, beside the story itself?

Artful Language and a Subtle Sense of Humour. A Creative's deftness at utilizing just the right balance of these, such that all my defences and distractions recede to some silent back room, and I surrender to the beckoning of the story (whatever it is), step into the rhythm of the characters so completely I



am present on the same path they're driven to navigate. All writers can write, but one who weaves with artful language has the gift of magic.

You play guitar and sing such hauntingly beautiful songs, such as 'Sad eyes'. Do you remember when you first reached for a guitar and began to sing? Where did that impulse arise from? Do you write a song to sing or sing a song to write?

I'm grateful for your compliment, thank you. I can't remember that far back! Music was a thing in my childhood home and there were always instruments around, certainly always at least one guitar. I think expression through music emerged as a natural impulse, given the environment where the adults around me regularly played and sang at any opportunity. I wanted to be part of all that.



Hmmm. I write a song to sing or sing a song to write! Now you're having me consider this, my process, and I don't know that I have one. I might be practising (not to be construed as a serious endeavour) and if I like the sound of a certain chord progression I'll improvise some mumble phrasing that might inspire lyrics. Or if I have a poem around, I will see if I can work it into the progression. I like drumming as well as guitar, so something of worth might float past when I'm working on a beat. I would say that most of what I've written arrives from



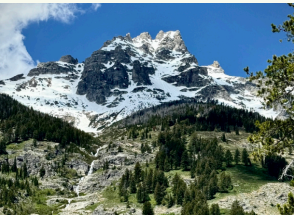
Improvisation. I don't really sit down to write a song but if one floats by I will make the effort to catch it. I once wrote a song while driving home from another city. Only, of course, I couldn't write anything down so I just sang it over and over in the car until I could get home and set it down before I forgot the whole thing. Many potential songs have escaped to the ether but that's how it goes.

And finally, our Episode ends with a parliament of owls, can you tell us your favourite collective noun? An existing one or one of your own creation.

Oh yes! Close your eyes and imagine this in the sky on a sunshine tranquil day:

A Kaleidoscope of Butterflies!

Thank you.



The photo is of the Grand Teton mountains in Jackson, Wyoming, one of several places Margaret explored on a recent camping/hiking trip to the US.



The Between continues...

Episode 24: Dis-comb-obulated

On 13 September 2024

This special edition is guest-edited by the brilliant [@MarshaWritesIt](https://twitter.com/MarshaWritesIt).

Hope retrieves her Codex from Doctor Warwick but a gun-toting Gamma threatens to upend her efforts.

We also interview Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Writer, Mum-of-2, and twister of tweet-length tales: [@nreillyjohnson](https://twitter.com/nreillyjohnson).

Plus we unravel a good yarn.

Find out more at: writteninhope.ink

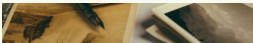


Have your say...

The **Underground Mice Writers Society** want to know your thoughts, your thinks, your views about *The Between*.

Which is your favourite episode so far, and why? Which character do you like the most (or least)? Is there an itch about the plot that you need scratching?

Email MiceWriters@gmail.com or tweet at [@TheMiceWriters](https://twitter.com/TheMiceWriters) to let us know. We'll be delighted to respond to a human.



Thank you humans!

Many in the Very Civil Service have lost faith in humanity, but we at the Underground Mice Writers Society still believe your species has plenty to offer.

A special thanks goes to a quartet of tall readers who helped to shape the early chapters of this epic:

[@IreneDreams](#), [@phantomsspleen](#) (formerly known as [@hungryghostpoet](#)), [@mordoc1](#), and [@writer_suzy](#).

Go read their work on Twitter (X), it's so good you'd think it was written by a mouse!

Below ground

The seed of *The Between* was planted way back in June 2020, but much of its story was taken from cuttings previously struck on Twitter.

So, this adventure simply wouldn't exist without the regular watering of the amazing online writing community, and the dedicated hosts and ambassadors of the Twitter word prompt games, such as [#vss365](#), that have inspired our world.

Thank you, to you all, from the bottom of our inkwells to the tips of our quills.

Oh, and we mustn't forget the collaboration between [@patchiesteve](#) and [@teabeesea](#), to which we owe our very existence!

The Editorial Team

The Underground Mice Writers Society

The Hope Folios #9

Collect the set

We hope you enjoyed episode 23% of *The Between*. There are 52 further episodes, and you can receive the whole set - in serialised form - for just £9.99 (£7.99 to Written in Hope email subscribers).

Visit writteninhope.ink/the-between to find out more.

5%: Before the Begin

1: The Begin

15%: The Renegade Engineers

2: The storm gathers

25%: A whiff of conspiracy

3: Nelson Epsilon

35%: Merryweather and Clarke

4: Doctor Warwick gets it wrong

45%: The Very Civil Service

5: Nelson Gamma

55%: The Queen of Mice

6: The turn of the worm

65%: The summons of Dream

7: From Forget to Nostalgia

75%: Thoreau the layhole

8: The Nun goes to prison

85%: Mythic Ink

9: The biblioklept

95%: The Map of Life

10: Nelson Delta

105%: Humboldt goes on the prowl

11: The Penguin Café

115%: Ada takes her Kew

12: The Nun meets her Fairy Godmother

125%: The Very Uncivil Service

13: HMS Warwick is sunk

135%: The Underground Mice Writers Society

14: A pounce of lion

145%: A think of ink

15: Doctor Warwick gets suspicious

155%: Thoreau's return

16: The Heist

165%: (Mostly) Polite conversations

17: The unlikely escape

175%: A worm of plot holes

18: Taxi!

185%: Flight

19: Enna and Fielding

195%: Redemption

20: Nuts, buns and cinnamon

205%: Stone cold

21: Where all roads meet

215%: A Parliament of Owls

22: Geronimo!

225%: Uncivil departure

23: Fortunes good, bad and told

23%: Merriweather's return

24: Dis-comb-obliterated

245%: One last heist

25: At a loose end

255%: Lost and found

26: The End

Picture this

Thank you to the people below whose pictures have helped bring the words in this magazine alive.

Cover photo: Kudryashka

Pages 2/3: Kelly Sikken*

Page 4: Tyler Quiring*

Page 5: Meruyert Gonulla***

Page 6: Finn**

Page 7: cobectbhax@gmail.com**

Page 8: Ana Arantes***

Page 9: Kudryashka**

Page 10: Kudryashka**

Page 11: element5***

Page 12: Cottonbro***

Page 13: Neil Mewen*

Page 14: Annie Spratt*

Page 16/17: Joseph-8K***

Page 18: Chaitanya Pillala*

Page 19: Daniel K Cheung*

Page 22: Weston M*

Page 23: British Library*

Page 24: Aaron Burden*

Page 25: Arnon Harari*

Page 26: Neom*

Page 27: Ben White*

Page 28: Tommas H*

Page 29: @fhaedra

Page 31/32: Loverna Journey*

*On Unsplash.com

**On DepositPhotos.com

*** On Pexels.com