

AN EXPERIMENT

“Father said!” Mouse grinned from under the wet towel wrapped around his head.

“Father told you to climb a tree in a rainstorm?” Vincent looked at Catherine as he said this, only to see her valiantly trying to hide a grin; which didn’t help him to keep a straight face.

Mouse nodded vigorously, sending water drops flying in all directions from his soaked clothing, which was already dripping on Vincent’s carpet. “Said a man, Franklin somebody, did it. Wanted to see. Electricity.”

Vincent was still having trouble with his face, and Catherine had moved out of Mouse’s view to sit on Vincent’s bed, although Vincent could still see her. She was bent over in helpless mirth.

“I think I understand. You went out to fly a kite in a rainstorm, to replicate Benjamin Franklin’s experiment?”

“Not replicate. To see if it worked.”

Vincent sat down at his table across from Mouse. “Let me see if I have this correctly. You went out in a rainstorm, at night, to fly a kite because you wanted to see if Franklin’s experiment worked. How did it happen that you ended up in a tree?”

“Simple. Kite caught in the tree.” Mouse grinned cheerily.

That sent Catherine into fresh stifled hilarity. Vincent’s head went down as he valiantly tried to suppress his amusement. When his control was assured once more, he raised his head to ask another question. “Why did you decide to do this experiment at night, Mouse?”

Mouse looked surprised, as if he couldn’t understand why Vincent didn’t see why. “Easier to see lightning at night!”

Now Catherine was in real pain. A snort was drawn from Vincent, as he lost his battle with mirth. He turned so that Catherine wasn’t in his line of sight; it was hard enough to keep a straight face without having to watch her.

When he had recovered himself, Vincent said. “It’s fortunate that Catherine and I went to the drainage tunnel to watch the storm. You might have had to stay in the tree all night if I hadn’t found you.”

“Uh-huh. Couldn’t get down.” He ducked his head and looked up from under his fringe of hair, grinning shyly. “Easier going up.”

“I see. That seems to explain everything. It was really Father’s doing.” Vincent got up. “We’d better get you to your chamber so you can change into some dry clothes.”

He turned to Catherine. “Do you want to walk along with us?”

“Yes, of course, Vincent. I wouldn’t want to miss a word of this conversation. It’s so enlightening. Electricity, you know.”

“Stop.” He was grinning at her now. “I can’t take any more.”

He turned to Mouse. “Well, Mouse, what are the results; what did you learn from this experiment?”

Another shy smile. “Easy. Don’t climb trees.”

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